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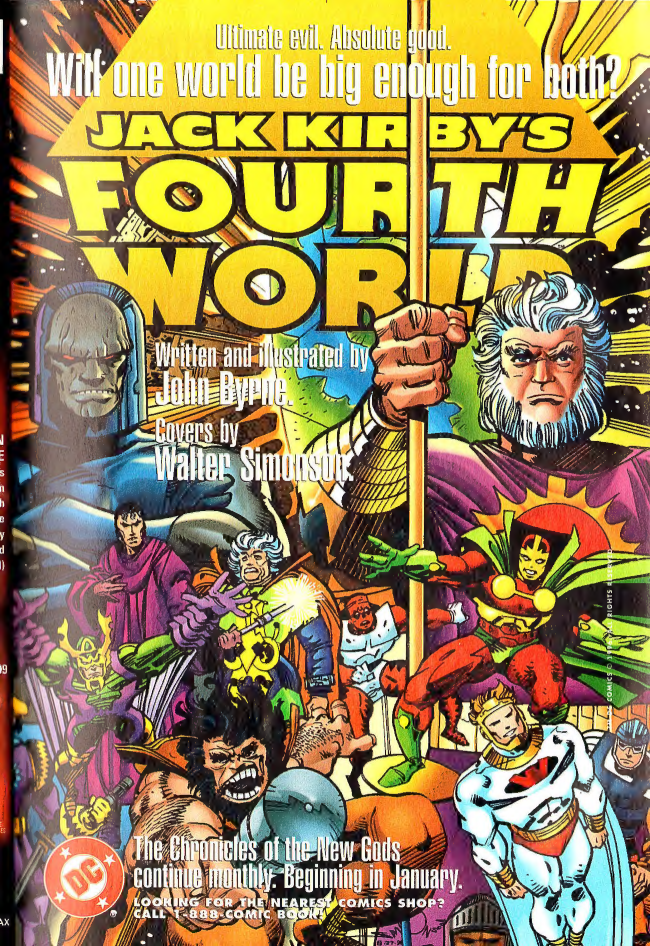
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Letter From the Editor

When Good was Good

Ah, the Year-End Special. What you currently hold in your hands represents a
year in the comic industry. Everything you could think of happened in our hobb
this year. From the introduction of new companies to the demise of familiar
imprints, this year has been full of surprises.

But I think what has surprised me the most this year is the subtle change in the
general tone of comic book stories. By tone, I mean the dark, I'll-kill-or-destroy
my-problems, anti-hero stories that have become so popular. I'm talking about
books like **Preacher**, **DV8**, **Lady Death**, **Onslaught**, and **Spawn**. But before eve
one decides to go off on me my "outdated" views, please hear me out.

I like these books as well. To be honest, **Preacher**, **DV8**, and **Spawn** list in my t
ten favorites. No kidding. I'm not picking on these titles, I'm discussing their to
or attitude. For example, why are tons of our "good guys" really "*bad* guys?"
And why is "bad" now "good?" Think about that a minute. Why does the abili
to kill 10 people make that hero cool? And why are so many titles shipping to
so dark and moody? Is that really what fans want?

Granted, there are many exceptions. Let's take Batman for example. He's a da
character, but he still clings to what my idea of a good guy.... oops. There. I sa
it. I believe I just summed up my problem (well, at least one of them). MY IDEA
a GOOD GUY.

You see, I got into comics to escape the dreaded REAL world. I liked entering
world where I could fight alongside the good guys for the fate of the universe.
One where I could get away from all the bad things (like murder and destructi
that were happening to the rest of the world. Because, in the comic universe, t
good guys always won and evil could never prevail. This was what comics
offered me. If I wanted reality, I could pick up a newspaper.

But now, as always, things change. Somewhere down the line, the real world
crept into our little universe and changed it forever. Is that bad? I don't know.
just know that when readers leave our everyday world of hate, death, and mo
destruction, where the good guys don't always win, to enter our comic univers
the only difference these days is that we have to share the comic universe with
super "heroes." Other than that, the real world and the comic world seem aw
similar.

Like I said, though, I don't know if this is a bad thing or not. Please don't get
wrong—I'm definitely against censorship in any form. Looking at what's on th
racks, though, it seems like there aren't very many superhero books that are
aimed towards kids. And they're the future of this industry, after all. If parents
won't let their children buy these darker books, perhaps we need to rethink ou
audience focus.

What do you think? It's not my idea of a good guy. Is it yours? Let me know, a
we'll talk again soon.

Mike

CRUSADE ENTERTAINMENT

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MANGA!

SHI

2000

FEBRUARY '97

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FAN MAIL

CATCHING UP

[Do to a printer error, Larry's letter got cut off last month—as well as a bunch of really funky other stuff going on in the FAN Mail as well. So, sorry Larry and anyone else this may have confused.]

Dear **FAN**:

I don't buy **FAN** every month but did just pick up #17. Herewith some comments on various stuff in **FAN Mail**.

1. THE GREAT PRICE DEBATE: The only comic book I know of that looks good on slick paper is the Jones/Beaty **Batman**. A few other comics may look best on "high quality" paper stocks. Most comic books look best on high quality newsprint and there is simply no way that costs enough to charge $2.95 per comic. I doubt there is a shortage of newsprint, either. The idea seems to be to pay .50¢ extra for fancy paper, then charge $1.50 more for the comic. For crying out loud, look at a few early issues of **Swamp Thing**, **Dr. Strange**, **Conan**, or **Strange Adventures**—comics can't get better than that and it's partly because those vintage comics are printed on newsprint; it gives the colors a depth that can't be achieved with harder, whiter, less porous paper.

2. LOOKING FOR A SOAPBOX OF HIS OWN: I have not read the Jeph Loeb article in question. But I did drop **Preacher** after 12 issues because I got tired of Mr. Ennis trying to shock me with violence and splatter. Arseface my ass. Be sure to see the **Saint of Killers** mini-series for more extreme violence with very little story and no real surprises. I bought the series mainly for Steve Pugh's art—which, sadly, wasn't as good as his work on **Animal Man**, possibly due to the **Saint**'s subject matter.

3. ARE YOU FAN ENOUGH?: I missed the poll but, for what it's worth, I fit into the middle category: Good story + good art = good comic. It's a synergy that makes this art form unique. If anything, the art is more equal. Anybody who cares only about the story ought to read a good novel, for Christ's sake. There's a whole universe out there called "literature."

Thanks for reading a 49-year-old, mainly back issues guy.

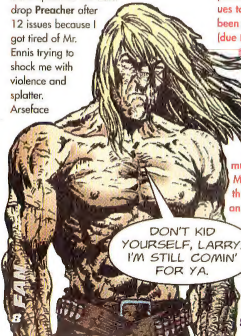
Larry Lueck
Chicago, IL

Thanks for the letter Larry, although we can't understand how you can only pick up *FAN* every once in a while.

1. The only people that seem to be unhappy about comic prices are fans and some creators. Comics sales have been decreasing, and as a result, prices continue to go up. The reason some publishers cite is that they still need to make money on the books, so they raise prices to compensate for lost revenues. However, the prices escalate while readership continues to drop because those people who've been on the verge of dropping the title (due to bad story, art, dissatisfaction with the character, or general disinterest in comics) are using the price change as the rationale to quit. And sales continue to go down because someone who might have considered trying out that book can't because they're already spending too much money on their regular titles. Meanwhile, the businessmen make their money by jacking up the prices and the fans lose out. But hey, this is business we're talking about, right?

2. No story to the *Saint of Killers*? I suppose *The Outlaw—Josey Wales* and *The Unforgiven* had no story either.

3. "Anybody who cares only about the story ought to read a good novel." That's a good point. But then, if all you care about are pretty pictures, perhaps you should go to an art museum.



CORRECTIONS BOX

A PERSONAL RETRACTION

Recently in Issue #19, L. Todd Hoffer made a mistake in the Rikki Rockett interview. I was so overwhelmed to even be talking to him that I identified him as the lead singer of Poison. He is not lead singer but drummer extraordinaire. Also I misspelled his last name. There are two T's in his last name. I apologize for any confusion this may have caused anyone, and I would also like to apologize to Rikki, as soon as he lets me out of his basement. Sorry.

BREAK OUT THE CRYPT

Dear **FAN**:

It seems there's a pretty good market for **Tales from the Crypt** stuff, so why hasn't anybody (recently) tried to do a new comic book series? I know there are a lot of people out there that would spend their money on it.

Thanks for listening.
Aaron Thompson
Pembroke Pines, FL

Well, Aaron, it's interesting that you should ask that question. We are the same company that also publish the old *Tales from the Crypt* comic reprints. However, due to the TV show and the movies, navigating the licensing situation is kind of like navigating white water rapids with a spoon instead of an oar.

OUT OF WORK NO MORE!

Dear **FAN**:

I've been collecting comic books since 1988, and I have to say that the rise of the comic book magazine is the greatest thing to happen to the industry since sliced bread. They keep us up to date on our favorite characters, titles, artists, writers, companies, etc. Clearly though, **FAN** is the best. Every month there's an issue with diverse content, covering all of the major companies. Keep up the good work!

Issue # 18 had a piece entitled "Bring

ROEL
"ROEL'S DRAWINGS ARE BEAUTIFUL AND HIS STORYTELLING IS EXCELLENT. WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE A LOT MORE COMING FROM HIS HANDS"
BORIS
"IT'S REFRESHING TO SEE SOMEONE NEW THAT REALLY KNOWS HOW TO DRAW"
BROM
ROEL IS COMING IN FEBRUARY
TRY A NEW KIND OF ADVENTURE FROM THE BEST NEW ARTIST OF THE YEAR!
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FAN MAIL

Back the Bad Guys," and I couldn't agree more (the only thing that would be nicer are quality 75¢ comics). It's really cool that the same month you publish that Marvel should bring back the Green Goblin, they do so in **Spider-Man** # 75: **Revelations** part four of four!!!!!!!!! This of course is the issue where Peter Parker once again becomes Marvel's greatest icon, Spider-Man!!!!! Your description of the perfect Goblin rebirth even came true!!! In this story, it is revealed that the Green Goblin has used his knowledge to manipulate Spider-Man for years, bringing back the "we never know when he will show up and he knows all of Peter's secrets and he could expose Peter to the world and ruin his life forever," as worded by the author of this article, Tony Starks. They even off Ben Reilly (yaaaaaaaaayyyyyyyyyy)!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Ber that makes them feel stupid.

One more thing I'd like you to get back to me on. In **X-S-E** # 1, we see Bishop's and Shard's childhood. We receive our first glimpse of their grandmother, a black woman with white hair who speaks of the X-Men as "giants." The artist does a good job of showing her feelings through her expression as she is stirring dinner, and she seems to be remembering something. When Hancock says something about the grandmother's knowledge being secret, she says, "Hush Hancock! People think me dead; with my powers gone, it is better for the children and myself that they do." Dead give away. This women is either Storm or some crazy old coot!!!!!! Could you get Marvel's comment on this, and your own opinion?

Stuart Cherry
Baltimore, MD

Stuart, these things happen all the time in the wild and wacky soap opera life of the X-Men. And Marvel's not about to tell any secrets. Best thing we can tell you is if you suspect something, it's probably for a good reason. Good work.

JOHN WAYNE WAS A SISSY

Dear **FAN**:

I picked up your magazine just in time to read Part Two of Beau Smith's "Testosterone Theater" (**FAN** #16). I've read articles and the like by Smith before, so it was no surprise to see him blowing steam over what he views as "manly movies," and I agree that *The Thing* and *Gunga Din* are stand-out films. I also agree that the more recent films he listed (*Rambo, Die Hard*, etc.) are categorizable as "fast food" films.

Still, to put down *Desperado*, a stylish action yarn that owes more to

TRIVIA

BE A WINNER! with FAN'S TRIVIA HUNT

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to find the hidden trivia questions throughout FAN. There are 10 in all. Send us the correct answers, and we will draw 5 winners from the correct answers and mail you some cool prizes from our Overstreet' Vault O' Valuables (y'know, like premium edition comics, signed & numbered edition comics, and lots of other cool stuff).

So, to get you started in the right direction, here's the first question: Where is the Savage Land located?

Ok, so the first one's on us, now you find the other nine.

Mail all entries to:
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MARS ATTACKS® THE SAVAGE DRAGON® (#1-4)

Is the Savage Dragon® really a Martian?

Is this the Dragon's Secret Origin?

(God™ only Knows!)

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FAN MAIL

John Woo than it does to Howard Hawks, is the mark of one stuck perhaps too far in the past. And on top of that, to laud the late John Wayne, a sissy-boy who avoided military service during World War II while real men like Jimmy Stewart and Clark Gable did their duty, is laughable at best. To quote a remark I read which was attributed to Sam Shepard (a REAL manly man) in regards to Wayne, "Ah, hell, he's just a big old girl."

Sincerely,
Paul Schulze

Did you ever see the movie *Repo Man*? There's a great bit about John Wayne in there too.

you can see from these photocopies that this may not be true. These photocopies were taken from a 1974 fanzine that was published by Charlton, when Mr. Liefeld was 7. In the comic, we can plainly see Nightshade fighting a villain named Image, who is sporting the Image logo on his chest and forehead. This may be a coincidence, but it does seem rather *extreme*. In fact didn't Charlton sell all their characters to DC in the '80s? Does that mean that DC owns the Image name and logo? Points to ponder.

Regards,
Allen Coccola
Brentwood Bay, BC
Canada

Who created Image?
You decide?

Points to ponder indeed. Sounds like a conspiracy to us. Hhhmmm....

DC OWNS IMAGE?

Dear **FAN**:

In issue #18, in the Liefeld interview, Mr. Liefeld states "It is true that I designed the logo and named the company." I think

EISNERS, EMMYS & OSCARS

Dear **FAN**:

Jeph Loeb asked to explain to him (in issue #16) how come top twenty comic book characters who dominate sales do not get recognized in The Eisners and other related comic book awards, with Marvel and Image primarily being overlooked.

Look to the Oscars and The Emmys for your answers. Popular movies and TV shows do not automatically translate into BEST categories. The quantity of Spider-Men, Batmen, and Spawns do not make them better; it makes them common. A

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Now when you send in your response to **FAN**'s question of the month, send us YOUR PHOTOGRAPH and a line or two about the question we asked.

WHY?

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Gemstone Publishing
1966 Greenspring Dr. Suite 405
Timonium, MD 21093

ARE YOU FAN ENOUGH?

"Vampires? Bring 'em all on! How many? I say 5 monthly or so."

Rich Panek
McHenry, IL

Since Rich was cool enough to respond to the **POLL POSITION** in **FAN** #18, we're gonna send him something cool. He's getting an **Diamond Exclusive Edition Vampirella: Morning in America** trade paperback. The first person to send us their picture with their **Poll Position** next month will get something cool as well.

POLL POSITION

Each month in **FAN**, we ask you, the reader, your opinions on different aspects of the comic collecting industry. After tallying the results, we'll publish them right here for all the world to see, including the head honchos who are calling the shots at your favorite (and not-so-favorite) companies. So clip this out, copy it, or write your response on a post card and mail it to POLL POSITION c/o **Overstreet's FAN**. Oh yeah, and for you cyber-people, feel free to e-mail your response to **FAN**, just be sure to mention POLL POSITION in your header. All responses must be received by January 22, 1997 in order to be tallied

DO REVIEWS AFFECT YOUR COMIC BUYING DECISIONS?

_____YES

_____NO

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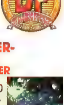

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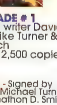

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BACK ISSUE BONANZA

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comic book whose norm is a superhero bashing a super-villain is not going to stand up to a comic book of quality. Superheroes are like Harlequin novels—they sell well, but few, if any, ever win awards. It takes someone going against the norm using an interesting, original approach to win awards.

Sincerely,
David Easter
Park Hills, MO

Y'know, the Oscars and the Emmys aren't necessarily the most critically accepted awards in their fields. And Harlequin romance novels are like superhero comics how? I mean, X-Men aside, I need a little help here.

THE WORLD'S GREATEST HEROES

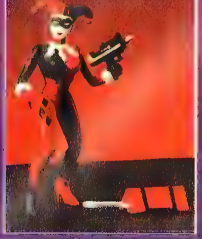
Dear **FAN**:

I picked up issue #17 to read about your cover story on the latest incarnation of the Justice League of America. While I found the Retrospective feature interesting (condensing 30+ years of JLA history was no small task), the interview with Gerry Conway was what I appreciated the most. As a long time fan of the Justice League since issue #123, I welcomed this small tribute to the writer "who had the greatest influence on the JLA's run." His recollections of the origins of the **Crisis** and the contributions of the Marvel style to the current DC style were like windows into comics history. Thank you for this bringing back pieces of history against the backdrop of the relaunching of the DCU's Greatest Heroes magazine.

Sincerely,
George W. Ioannidis
Lancaster PA

So you must be tickled pink at the newest incarnation of the JLA then? Most of us at *FAN* are (except for Senior Graphic Artist Jeff Dillon, but he's known around the office as The Grump anyway).

HOMEGROWN TOYS



by Charlie Jackam, San Diego, CA (l-r) Batgirl, Harley Quinn, Black Canary
PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOHN HENRY

FANGALLERY

FAN ARTIST OF THE MONTH

SPIDER-MAN
William Carlisle
Lawrence, MA

THE HALL

X-Men #25 Black & White Variant Cover

ARTISTS OF NOTE

THE PREDATOR
Keith Newsome Columbus, OH

THE HULK
Micheal J. Phillips Wilmington, DE

WITCHBLADE
Richie Rich Louisville, KY

EVIL ERNIE
Thomas L. Mason Blytheville, AR

SPIDER-MAN
Kyle Dearing Leander, TX

Correction
In **FAN** #18 we listed our artist o the month as Jonn Neeld. The artist, however, who drew the great **The Tick Meets Spider-Man** is, in fact, Joe Nealid.

YOU LIKE TO DRAW? YOU LIKE FREE STUFF?

Each month, **FAN** picks the best artwork sent in by our readers to run in the magazine. If your art is deemed by the **FAN** staff to be the best, you'll receive some way cool prize pulled from the vast underground **FAN** vault o' valuables.

All entries must be addressed to **FAN GALLERY** and include your name, age, address, and phone number. And remember, nothing you send us is returnable, so keep your originals.

-FILES

FIRST DYNAMIC FORCES SHOW A PACKED HOUSE

The weekend of October 25-27 found the **FAN** staff setting up at the first ever Dynamic Forces Convention, held in uptown New York City. The convention was a tremendous success, with more than 5,000 people in attendance throughout the three days and more guests than we could keep track of. Spotted signing for long lines of fans were Jeph (Capt. America) Loeb, Tim (Batman: The Long Halloween) Sale, Mike (Hellboy) Mignola, Mark (Kingdom Come) Waid, Humberto (Impulse, DV8) Ramos, and many, many more.

Andy (X-Men) Kubert signs for the fans at his table.

Where were the FAN staffers? Manning our booth? Hanging out with the celebs? No way—Graphics master Jeff Dillon and writer Joe Rybandt (l to r) dig frantically through 50 cent and quarter boxes.

The scene at the first Dynamic Forces convention, as dealers and fans fill the aisles and lingered well after the closing times each day.

Chuck (Detective Comics) Dixon relaxes after a long day of signing and answering questions for fans.

The Storyteller himself, Barry Windsor-Smith, signs one last poster for a fan.

Darkness Has Once Again Entered
The Human Confines Of
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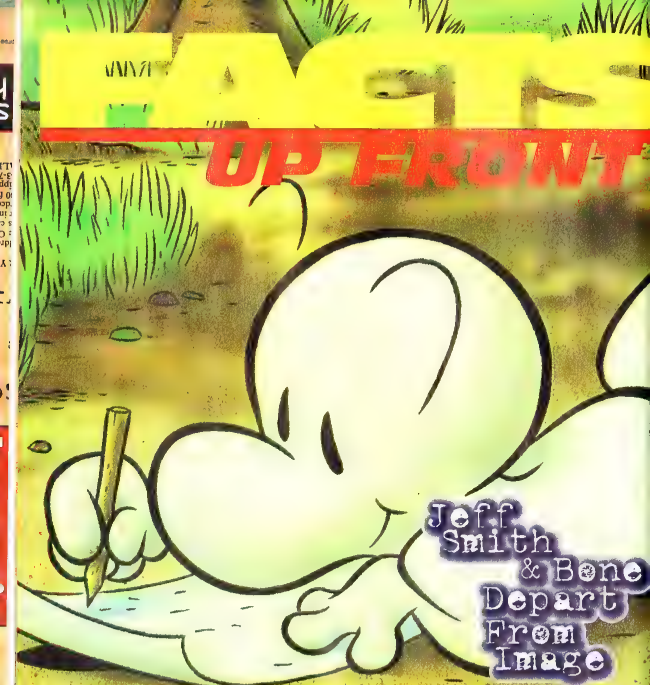
...And This Time It's Forever!



Bone creator Jeff Smith announced recently that he has left Image Comics and will continue to publish his award-winning series at Cartoon Books, home of the **Bone** trade paperbacks. This announcement, Smith wants to make clear, has nothing to do with the recent changes at Image, and is actually in response to changes in the industry.

"Image has been great to us, and the split is amicable," Smith emphasizes. "Even though I know everybody says that when they leave, it really is true. We went to Image in the Spring of '95 during the distributor wars and the wars between exclusives. It's now at a point where it's reached a pinnacle. Certainly the distributors can only consolidate so much. It can't get any narrower. The only way the situation could get worse is if all the comic book shops close and there's no more direct market. In which case, I don't need to be at Image to go out of business. I can go out of business on my own [laughs]."

Smith further made clear that the continuity of **Bone** would be unaffected by his changing companies again. "The storyline to me is absolutely sacred. It's terribly important. It was totally unaffected by my going to Image, it will be unaffected by my leaving Image, and, ten years from now, when someone reads the **Bone** comics in the collections, there will be no way to tell which issues were at Image and which issues weren't. In fact, going to Image was an effort to protect the story, to make sure that kind of thing wasn't interrupted, to make sure I can continue to do the stories that I want to do."

Bone fans can continue to look for Image to reprint **Bone** up until #20, which is scheduled to ship in June of '97. According to Smith, "We know it's fun for the people who got into it at Image, and it also helps reinforce the fact that Cartoon Books is not fleeing from Image. I enjoyed going to Image. I got a lot of things accomplished that were part of my own personal goals. Like trying to get a black and white, non-superhero book as far into the comic mainstream as I possibly could, and I feel like Image helped me do that. Image is cool. They're helping me take off, there's nothing weird or anything."

—Christopher Woodward

Sirius Shines in 1997

In 1996, Sirius Entertainment enhanced its eclectic stable of talent with the addition of Teri Sue Wood [**Wandering Star**], Mark Crilley [**Akiko**], and Tavicat [**Reality Check**]. Now, this dynamo of the independent comic book market has revealed its exciting new projects for 1997.

One of the more anticipated new series is **Darklight**, the second title from Teri Wood following the conclusion of **Wandering Star** in early '97. Previewed in **Negative Burn** #25, the series – according to Teri, "a horror-fantasy that I hope will scare the chickens out of you at times, yet make you laugh out loud at others." While Teri insists the story will indeed end, following a long term arc much like **Wandering Star**, the pacing will be far slower, taking place over a run of 40 to 60 issues beginning in late summer of '97. Teri promises to invoke the "days of monsters and myths, when dark things still walked among us."

Other projects include a self-titled one-shot from newcomer Roel Wielinga. With **Roel**, Sirius claims that Wielinga's fully rendered penciled artwork puts the "art" back in "comic art." Inspired by **Heavy Metal**-style fantasy, the 32-page story should definitely turn some heads. Robb Horan describes Roel as "possibly the most important new talent to emerge in comic art this year."

Finally, there's **Enchantments**, by writer/artist Robert Chang. Consisting of two three-issue mini-series, one in black and white and one in fully-painted color, the story focuses on rival clans of mystics in modern day San Francisco. While the series has taken some time to reach fruition owing to Chang's perfectionist style, Robb assures us that **Enchantments** "will be well worth the wait." As 1997 arrives with a whole new array of entertaining projects from Sirius, the wait would appear to be over.

Arnold I. Blumberg

Morrison & Millar Run With The Flash

Mark Waid is leaving **The Flash**...for a while at least. Waid announced that he was taking a much-deserved break, "I look at the post-**Race Against Time** issues, it's clear to me that I'm not bringing to **Flash** the same enthusiasm that I have in years past." Rather than face a case of burnout which could ruin him for the character, Waid's taking a self-imposed exile, "I'd rather step back for a year, recharge my **Flash** batteries, and scheme and plot and plan for the future."

Now comes the fun part; beginning tentatively at issue #130, Grant Morrison and Mark Millar will be taking over as the writers of **The Flash**. "Initially it's an honor. It's my favorite comic and it was my favorite comic as a kid, so to be given this thing for a year is fabulous; what we're gonna do is just keep up the high standards," said Morrison of their impending run with the Fastest Man Alive. For Waid and co-writer Brian Augustyn, it was never an issue of who would run a lap in the race, "We told editor Paul Kupperberg, 'If Grant and Mark turn us down, we'll just find a way to stay on the book. They're our one and only choice.'" Morrison added that, "We've become friends, but it was quite a shock when he called me to do **The Flash**."

As for what will be happening in their work, Morrison and Millar have a lot planned. "One of the first things we're going to do is put the Flash in a wheelchair. He'll be badly injured and have to deal with that. Then we're gonna have a race, which we haven't seen for a long time, right across the universe through space and time, with the fate of the Earth hanging in the balance." Also look for a new villain "From the dark side of the Speed Force under the working title of the Black Flash." During his off-time, Waid will be working hard on his return, "Brian and I have already begun work on **The Flash** #143, the prologue to **Chain Lightning**, the biggest, most sweeping **Flash** epic ever told." We'll be there for it all!

—Joseph P. Rybandt

New Star Wars: A New Hope Comic From Dark Horse

To coincide with the theatrical rerelease of *Star Wars: A New Hope* this coming February, Dark Horse Comics will be releasing **Star Wars: A New Hope—The Special Edition**. This new book features the story of the film redrawn by Eduardo Barreto and Al Williamson complete with the scenes that have been added to the movie by Lucasfilm. This new adaptation will be released simultaneously as a trade paperback collection and as a monthly, four-issue miniseries. The adaptation will be on sale in late January, with new adaptations of **The Empire Strikes Back** and **Return of the Jedi** to follow in the two months following, as each of them coincide with the rerelease of their respective film. In **FAN** this month, Dark Horse is giving readers a chance to win the new adaptation of **Star Wars: A New Hope** before it's released—just check out the contest on pages 152-153.

—CW

Even the mightiest ruler was once a child.

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Discover the secrets behind the throne of a magical realm.

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Peter Gross
illustrator
Hermann Mejia
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artistupfront J. H. Williams & Mick Gray

Though this space is usually reserved for showcasing one new artist, penciller J. H. Williams and inker Mick Gray are damn near inseparable—both as friends as well as artists. They are also catching the attention of professionals and fans alike, working together on projects like **Batman**, **Starman**, as well as their upcoming **Justice Riders** (*The Wild, Wild West* meets a spaghetti Western meets the **Justice League**) and creator-owned **Chase** series. These, as well as other projects, have almost guaranteed success for these two "artist types." We at **FAN** were lucky enough to catch them on the way up.

FAN: So how exactly did you and J. H. start working together?

Mick: I was sitting next to this guy at a convention in '94 who had done some amazing work, and I looked over at him and went, "WOW! you do amazing work." So I then struck up a conversation with him, and it was Jim, and he was really in awe of what I was working on, which was inking Chuck Austin's book **Strips**. So after that first meeting, Jim and I stayed in touch over the next three or four months—doing a little bit of work together here and there and just fooling around with stuff that never materialized. And when he got the gig to do **Wolverine '95** for Marvel, Jim was ready for somebody new to ink his work, so he gave me and Mark McKenna a call. That was the start of it right there. He liked what I was doing, because I was capturing what he wanted to see. The thing about Jim is that he puts down exactly what he wants to see, and if the inker doesn't capture that, it's obvious right away. And what's great for me as an inker is that J. H. Williams' work is constantly moving progressively forward in his different, interesting, innovative style! He's not just jumping on the "copy the hot artist" bandwagon like a lot of people do out there. So getting to work with one of my favorite artists in the business is just wonderful.

J. H.: What also makes us work so well together is the fact that we were friends for a while before we ever got to work together. He was Mark McKenna's assistant for a long time, and, at the time we met, I hadn't been published professionally or anything, and I kept getting assigned inkers that just destroyed me. So Mick kept saying that I should find somebody better to ink my work, and that I should work with McKenna and him. So I told Mick that I'd rather just work with him since he's so good. So I penciled some pieces for him to ink over and sent it to him, and when they were sent back to me, I was just blown away! I was like, "Mick, what are you doing being somebody's assistant [laughter]?" From that point on, I started pushing his name on stuff, and as our work load started getting greater, I took the attitude that I'm not going to work with anybody else, because Mick understands how I work. He has no problems experimenting a little if I want something a bit different, and he and I can really communicate where other people have a really hard time understanding what I want.

Jim, there's even been talk that you've turned down assignments from editors who weren't going to let Mick ink your work...

J. H.: Why should I?

Mick: [Laughter] The biggest honor of my career was when Jim actually turned down some pretty high-profile Marvel projects just because the editor said, "We don't need an inker." Jim then told them, "Thanks anyway, but I'm very happy with who I have, and I don't want to take any chances, so I'm going to have turn this down." And when he told me and my wife that, we almost melted. I couldn't believe that he turned down that great project because of me. And just because we believe in fate, the next projects have been even better. They still are.

—Scott Braden

Topps COMICS & FAN bring you the

MARS ATTACKS Contest

Design Your Own Martian

All you have to do is design an original Martian and mail it off to FAN! Your design may be of a stand-alone character or in the form of a trading card (such as Mars Attacks the FAN Offices). Winners will be chosen based on quality, originality, and pure strangeness, much in the same way we chose our staff.

GRAND PRIZE

ONE WINNER receives MARS ATTACKS: THE OFFICIAL MOVIE ADAPTATION (2-issue series) signed by Mars Attacks creator Len Brown, an 8-issue set of MARS ATTACKS Volume II and the MARS ATTACKS BASEBALL SPECIAL, signed by various creators, and a box of MARS ATTACKS WideVision cards.

FIRST PRIZE

TEN WINNERS each receive MARS ATTACKS: THE OFFICIAL MOVIE ADAPTATION (2-issue series) and a box of MARS ATTACKS WideVision cards.

Winning artwork will appear in a future issue of FAN!

Just mail in your alien with the completed coupon on this page to Gemstone Publishing, Inc., Mars Attacks Contest, 1966 Greenspring Drive, Suite 405, Timonium, MD, 21093. Entries must be received by January 31, 1997.

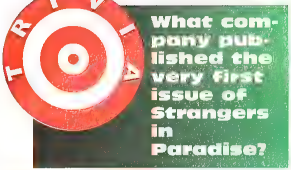
No, this isn't a self-portrait I've enclosed (but it's pretty close...).

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Void where prohibited by law. This contest is void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law. For the names or images of all prizes offered, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Mars Attacks Prizes, Gemstone Publishing, Inc., 1966 Greenspring Drive, Suite 405, Timonium, MD, 21093. Your request will be processed within 30 days of receipt. Gemstone Publishing, Inc. reserves the right to substitute prizes of equal or greater value for those listed above. Prizes will be awarded in the name of and released to winners' parents or legal guardians if winners are minors. Canadian and overseas winners are responsible for any customs duties, taxes, and local sales and federal taxes will be the sole responsibility of the prize winner. Canadian and overseas winners are responsible for any customs duties, taxes, and local sales and federal taxes will be the sole responsibility of the prize winner. Gemstone Publishing, Inc. reserves the right to substitute prizes of equal or greater value for those listed above. Prizes will be awarded in the name of and released to winners' parents or legal guardians if winners are minors



Kingdom Come A Novel Concept

Warner Books has announced it will be publishing a novel-length version of 1996's acclaimed DC Comics mini-series, **Kingdom Come**. With publication set for 1997, the book will be written by longtime Superman writer Elliot S. Maggin and based upon the story created by Mark Waid and Alex Ross for the comic. The book will feature an original wrap-around cover and interior artwork by Alex Ross created specifically for the novel. This new art will be presented as four-fully painted color illustrations and four black and white plates in the novel. What's more, **Kingdom Come** will be simultaneously released as a multiple-voice audio dramatization by Time Warner AudioBooks.

—CW

Shadowman #1 Recalled

Due to a printing error, a small number of misprinted issues of Acclaim Comics' **Shadowman** #1 were distributed to retailers, it was announced recently by the company. According to representatives at Acclaim's printer, signatures of the book were accidentally crossed, causing copies of the book to be bound with duplicate sets of pages. Acclaim has offered to replace any misprinted copies sent to them with a correct version of the book plus a free poster of Vince Evans' variant cover to **Shadowman** #1—an offer that includes retailers as well as readers. Estimates place the number at only 200-400 copies of the book as being misprinted, with none of them being variant editions. Holders of misprinted copies can return them to Shadowman #1 Misprint c/o Acclaim Comics, 275 7th Ave. New York, NY 10001.

—CW

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COMPANY NEWS

No...snappy...patter...this...month... much...too...tired...from...working...on this...massive.....issue.....of...FAN...

ABIOGENESIS PRESS

The **FAN**-favorite series **Strangehaven**, by writer/artist Gary Spencer Millidge, continues after a brief delay, with issue #6 shipping in February. Just to clarify, the book is quarterly, costs $2.95, and is worth every penny.

ACCLAIM COMICS

More fun from the re-birth! **Eternal Warrior Quarterly** puts Gilad, Ivar, and Aram back into the Valiant Universe. All the brand new fun is available in February from writer Art Holcomb and artist Doug Trapeo-Wheatley. • The new **Quantum & Woody** debuts in February. Follow the adventures of the world's worst superhero team-up (they said this, not us) thanks to writer Christopher Priest and artist Mark Bright. • All the regular Acclaim titles continue merrily along as well, as do the **Classics Illustrated Study Guides** with a fresh batch of old classics. A **Midsummer Night's Dream**, **Great Expectations**, The **Prince and the Pauper**, and **Moby Dick** are this month's offerings.

AC COMICS

Still reeling from hitting the 100 mark, AC is back at ya' in February. First off there's the **Femforce** Graphic Novel, **Timestorm**. It's 10 bucks and has a painted cover. • Over in the retro-corner you've got **Cat-Man Retro Comics** #0. This series, produced in 1997, will feature stories set in the 40s and 50s. Get it? Retro? we're talking about **Angel Girl** #0. Why does #0 come after #1? We don't know. What we do know is that **Angel Girl** #0 will be available in January and has a couple of nude cover editions • Same story as above with the January release of **Secret Files: The Strange Case** #0.

ANTARCTIC PRESS

More Shotgun Mary and Warrior Nun in February!?!?! You don't say! Both characters appear in brand-spankin' new issues in February. First there's **Shotgun Mary: Blood Lore**. This mini will be in full-color. Then we have the color-impaired **Warrior Nun: Black and White** which will be a bi-monthly anthology featuring all sorts of different perspectives on Warrior Nun.

ARCHIE COMICS

"Yogi, put down that ax, the ranger didn't mean it!" "I'm gonna slaughter that ranger if he does not give me that pic-a-nic basket, Boo-Boo!" Actually, this is exactly the kind of thing you will not be seeing in the new comic book adventures of **Yogi Bear** #1 debuting in February • **Sabrina The Teenage Witch** #1 continues the good-natured, for-the-whole-family fun with her brand-new series in February.

ANGEL ENTERTAINMENT

Last month we told you about **Angel Girl** #1, this month

AVATAR PRESS

In February, Avatar gives you **Furies** #0, a new mini-series. $3.00 for the regular and $5.00 for the Nude cover. • Also in February is **Twilight** #1, a two issue miniseries which'll set you back $3.00, but also has a nude cover that costs $5.00.

BLUE LINE COMIC BOOK ART PRODUCTS

They used to just produce the stuff to draw on, but now Blue Line is helping you get into this wacky 'biz. **Blue Line: A Guide To The Comic Business** is your one-stop guide to understanding the behind-the-scenes world of comic books. It will be available in February, so put your plans of comic-domination on hold until you check this out

BONGO COMICS

In **Simpsons Comics** #29, on sale in February, Homer takes on wrestling as Captain Slamtastic! Simpsons fun available in comic book form every month from Bongo. Thank you God.

BROADWAY COMICS

As of press time, Broadway had ceased publication of comics. Fatale indeed.

CALIBER COMICS

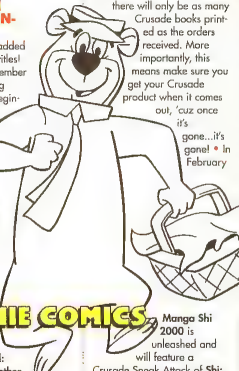
February sees the return of Mike Vosburg to comics! Vosburg is the veteran artist of numerous titles (**American Flagg** and **Cloak and Dagger** to name a few) and plans to return to comics hot from HBO animation with a series of **Lori Lovecraft** one-shots. The action starts in February. • The ambitious series, **The Searchers** begins anew in February. **The Searchers: Apostle of Mystery** #1 continues to follow the literary adventures of Caliber's team. • Exit **Epilogue** puts an end to the series, **Exit**, from creator Nabiel Kanan. It all comes to a close in 32 pages in February. • Part of **Strange Attractors** will be published by Caliber beginning in February. The bi-monthly miniseries, **Strange Attractors: Moon Fever** will mark the move by self-publisher/writer/artist Michael Cohen to the greener pasture of Caliber. • More **Deadworld** in February than you can shake a rotting corpse at. **Daemonstorm: Deadworld**, continues all the mayhem under a Mike Wieringo/Richard Case cover.

CHAOS! COMICS

Lady Death: The Crucible hits the half-way point with issue #3 in the six issue limited series. And there's the promise of a shocking ending from Brian and everyone at Chaos! • The **Encore Presentation of Evil Ernie** wraps up as well in February with issue #5 (of 5). • The collected **Lady Death: The Odyssey** TPB offers you all the issues of this mini for the low, low price of 10 bucks. Cheaper than trying to find the original issues, that's for sure. • The ultra-ginchy **Purgatori** comes back at you with #1 being offered in signed, limited edition form. Limited to 2000 copies, signed by the creators and bearing the official seal of Chaos!, it's all for only 25 bucks.

CRUSADE ENTERTAINMENT

Crusade has added more to their titles! Begun in November and continuing through the beginnings of '97, preview pages have been added to regular Crusade titles making these books Sneak Attack Editions. For example, **Shi/Daredevil: Honor Thy Mother** will contain a preview of the upcoming **TCB** in flip-book format! Be sure to follow all the Crusade titles to fully appreciate and understand the Sneak Attack Editions. • In other changes, Crusade will be moving to a print-to-order policy. What this means is that there will only be as many Crusade books printed as the orders received. More importantly, this means make sure you get your Crusade product when it comes out, 'cuz once it's gone...it's gone! • In February **Manga Shi 2000** is unleashed and will feature a Crusade Sneak Attack of **Shi: Heaven and Earth**. • Also in the month of love comes a limited edition poster by George Perez titled **Shi & Crimson Plague**. **Crimson Plague** will be the first look at the upcoming Perez creation.



DARK HORSE COMICS

In February there be monsters! **Dark Horse Monsters** by Tim Truman, Chris Warner and others, will feature a collection of monster stories from pages past of **Dark Horse Presents**. • Speaking of **DHP**, the February issue will feature a new **Monkeyman and O'Brien** story by Arthur Adams as well as a **Hectic Planet** story by Evan Dorkin. • More manga from the creator of **Outlanders**, Johji Manabe. **Drakuun: Rise of the Dragon Princess** will begin the first of several planned mini-series. • Continuing the reprint series **Dark Horse Classics** comes the re-presentation of the classic **Aliens Versus Predator**. Thrill again with this classic comic confrontation. • From the Blanc Noir imprint comes **Brave** #1. February promises to be packed with murder and action as Cully Hamner and Jason Martin tell the story. Also featured will be a back-up feature of Adam Hughes' new series, so you may have to wait a really long time

COMPANY NEWS

between issues. • Start saving those pennies *Star Wars* fans! The limited edition hardcover collection of **Star Wars: Heir to the Empire** is on its way. Slipcased, limited to 1000 copies, and only 80 bucks! Whatta-deal! • Surprise—more Star Wars from Dark Horse. **Star Wars: Dark Forces-Soldier for the Empire** is by William Dietz and Dean Williams. It will be available in March as a $25 hardcover. • We always save the best for last. **Tex Avery: Artist, Animator, and Director from the Golden Age of Animated Cartoons** is a comprehensive look back at this amazing man. This hardcover is 35 bucks and is being released through Dark Horse with Turner Publications.

DC COMICS

More Helix! More Helix! They heard you, settle down. More Garth Ennis! In time to go with your purchase of the latest **Preacher** trade collection, spend some of that Christmas cash and pick up **Hellblazer: Fear and Loathing**. This trade collection reprints issue #62-67 of the Ennis/Dillon Hellblazer. It's 15 bucks and features a new Glenn Fabry cover. • We don't want to find the issues, collect them for us! We don't want to find the issues, collect them for us! They heard you once again. The **Batman: Legacy** TPB will collect all of the virus-soaked, death-dealin' issues of this latest mega-Bat crossover.

ENTITY COMICS

We love 3-D, how about you? In February, **Behold 3-D** will be available... in 3-D! It's black and white and you need no glasses, so enjoy. • Bill Maus continues to weave tales of wonder with **Nira X**, this time in manga-style. **Nira X: Anime** is a mini-series and has two covers, each in manga-style!

FANTAGRAPHICS

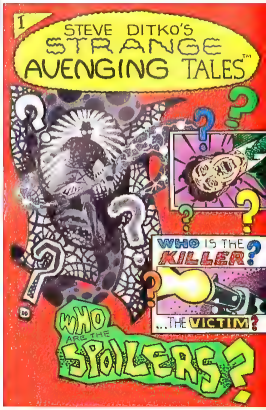
Steve Ditko returns to comics, and Fantagraphics has him. The legendary creator/artist is back with an all-new quarterly series beginning in February. **Steve Ditko's Strange Avenging Tales** #1 will be a chance for the legend to "strut his stuff beyond the typical constraints of mainstream, work-for-hire projects." • More **Complete Crumb** is also on the way. Volume 12 covers Crumb work from 1977-1979. • **Minimum Wage** #6 will arrive in stores in February. "Art Directors Must Die" is the much-anticipated return of Fingerman to the series after a brief hiatus.

FPG

The talented Brom will have another book to call his very own. **Darkwerks: The Art of Brom** will be available in February; it sports 128 pages, is gonna cost you 25 bucks, and features over 150 full-color examples of...well...the art of....Brom. Makes sense.

DARK HORSE

Brainbanx #1 is the first issue of a brand new limited series under the Helix banner. The series is brought to you in January by writer Elaine (**Vamps**) Lee and artist Temujin. • Let the Fourth World Live Again! Let the Fourth World Live Again! Again, they heard you, now please settle down **Jack Kirby's Fourth World** #1 will soon be brought to you monthly by John Byrne and Walter Simonson. • We want more **Books of Magic**! We want more **Books of Magic**! Please settle down, they're going as quickly as they can. **The Books of Faerie** is a three issue miniseries by writer Bronwyn Carlton and artist Peter Gross. It also marks the first time the popular Vertigo series has branched off and promises to "bring us one step closer to understanding young Tim Hunter's mystery-shrouded heritage." • More Garth Ennis!



FANTAGRAPHICS

HARRIS COMICS

The **Vampirella Lives** miniseries wraps up in February. Issue #3 (of 3) will be brought to you by writer Mark Millar and artist Amanda Conner. • The Vampi Anniversary continues with issue #2 (of 4) of the aptly titled **Vampirella Silver Anniversary Collection**. #2 features two covers, one by Jim Silke the other by Mark Beachum. • Looking ahead to next year: Joe Jusko takes his '70s painting sensibilities and does his magic on Vampirella in **Vampirella: Blood Lust**, a fully painted, two issue miniseries written by James Robinson. Groovy!

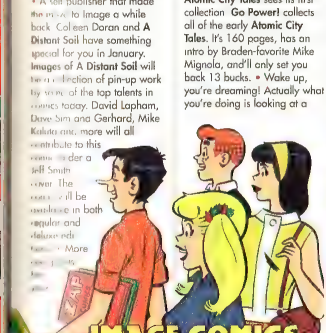
IMAGE COMICS

The kinda-big news this month is that another small self-publisher has been brought under the Image "I." Halloween Comics is the latest to seek refuge. Look for Halloween titles like ESPers and **The Age of Heroes** to be coming at you from Image in March of 1997. • A self-publisher that made the move to Image a while back, Colleen Doran and **A Distant Soil** have something special for you in January. **Images of A Distant Soil** will be a collection of pin-up work by some of the top talents in comics today. David Lapham, Dave Sim and Gerhard, Mike Kaluta and more will all contribute to this commemorative a Jeff Smith cover. The will be available in both regular and deluxe edi More

home from WildStorm Fine Arts. This time around we've got the repro print of **Jughead** #134 by artist Dan DeCarlo. Next up, we have the Todd McFarlane cover to **Spider-Man** #1, and the Jim Lee cover to **Fantastic Four** #1. Each print is meticulously crafted on the finest possible paper and limited to 300 units. Available in January with more to come!

KITCHEN SINK PRESS

Drool over all this, fan-boy! In January, **The Crow: Waking Nightmares** begins. This all-new series is by writer Christopher Golden, artist Phil Hester, and has covers by Miran (**X-Files**) Kim. • **The Crow: Dead Time** is a collection of the miniseries of the same name. It's $10.95. • One of the more interesting looking new series of 1997 is from KSP. **The Awakening** #1 is by Xeric Grant winner Stephen Blue and is well worth checking it out. • Jay Stephens' series, **Atomic City Tales** sees its first collection **Go Power!** collects all of the early **Atomic City Tales**. It's 160 pages, has an intro by Braden-favorite Mike Mignola, and'll only set you back 13 bucks. • Wake up, you're dreaming! Actually what you're doing is looking at a



BIG APPLE COMIC CON

SATURDAY JANUARY 25TH, 1997

ADM $5.00 **10am - 6pm** ADM $5.00

CHAOS! COMICS

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Enter the Chaos Omega Edition Comic Sweepstakes

☆ Over 50 Artists & Writers

☆ Special Effects Workshop presents Hollywood Make-up & Special Effects Demonstration

☆ Big Apple Superhero & Monster Costume Contest

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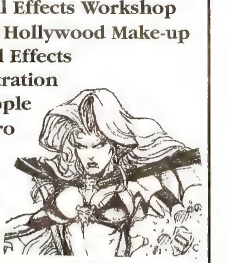

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NEXT CON MARCH 15th

COMPANY NEWS

book about dreams relax. **Flock of Dreamers** tells twenty tales of dreams by the likes of R Crumb, Rick Veitch, Jim Woodring and more. • Scott McCloud's **Zot** is collected into a 288 page hardcover featuring an intro by Kurt Busiek. It's a little pricey at $45.00, but damn worth it.

LIGHTNING COMICS

The very first issue (believe us, tracking down the first issue from a company that almost exclusively puts out #1 issues is not an easy thing) of Hellina that was penciled by Paul Abrams is now being offered again. Why? We have no idea, but now is your chance to jump into the Hellina fun! Hellina: Kiss of Death #1 Encore Edition

many variant and special edition covers and is available just in time for Valentine's Day gift-giving.

MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT

As the Heroes are half-way to being reborn again, Marvel and Co. have some big things planned. First in **Avengers** #4 and #5, the Hulk shows up to kick some ass! Then over in **Captain America**, Cable (yes the guy with the glowing eye and the bionic arm) shows up in issue #6. How? Read the issue! • Untold Tales of Star Trek? In **Star Trek: Operation Assimilation**, Paul (**Hellblazer**) Jenkins tell us a story of a Romulan ship's mysterious disappearance from *The Next Generation*. • Hot off the heels of *Escape from LA*., Snake Plissken is back in the one-shot **Adventures of Snake Plissken**. The story is set between the two *Escape* films and has a Daniel Brereton cover. Available in January. • It's Anniversary month in the X-Group! Both **Generation X** and **X-Man** hit the 25 mark and both will be celebrating in style with over-sized issues. Grab yourself a slice o' cake and enjoy.

MAXIMUM PRESS

Now that the dust has settled and the lawsuits are in full-swing, let's take a look at what Maximum Press has planned for February: **Asylum** continues with #12, **Avengelyne** #10 and #11 will have variant covers, **Battlestar Galactica The Compendium** will be a look at both the comics and the television show, **Cybrid** #1 jumps from the pages of **Avengelyne** and **Asylum**, the

WHO FOUND JEAN GREY'S BODY IN THE OCEAN?

...rossover we've all been

...waiting for, **Power Rangers Zeo**/Youngblood, will arrive in our grubby little hands, the conclusion of the **Prophet**/Cable miniseries, **Shaft** #1 (the Liefeld superhero, not Richard Roundtree), and finally **Supreme #46** by Alan Moore which features the debut of Supremo. That's all for now ...return to your homes ...nothing to see here ...return to your....

MORNING STAR PRODUCTIONS

Araknis has made the break from Mystic Comics, and its creators will be self-publishing. All the art and action will still be brought to you by the Ortiz Brothers. The new **Araknis** issue will be re-launched in April, so coal your jets and wait patiently.

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT

More zany merriment with Akiko as her and her friends continue their journey. All the fun is brought to you in **Akiko** #11 by Mark Crilley in January. • **Paison Elves** #20 continues the chaos as two new characters are introduced into Drew's world for "no other purpose than comedic relief." • Neck in neck with Drew comes **Wandering Star** #20 from Teri S. Wood. Cassandra and Co. continue to have problems with the Kekakoplous as the series heads towards its conclusion. • **Animal Mystic: Water Wars** #3 comes to you in January, and that's really mentioned just as an excuse to show you some of the Dark One's artwork.

SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS

In February, Slave Labor brings us **Lust For Life**, the new comic endeavor for Jeff **(No Hope)** Levine. The work is the first for Levine in almost two years and will be produced once every three months. • The 'zine turned comic, **Murder Can be Fun** #5, will be available in February and continues the feature on Celebrity Mishaps. You put the shot-glass where?

LIGHTNING COMICS

GEMSTONE PUBLISHING

ON SALE IN JANUARY

TALES FROM THE CRYPT #19
Full Color $2.50

WEIRD SCIENCE #19
Full Color $2.50

PANIC #1
Full Color $2.50

WEIRD FANTASY ANNUAL #4
Full Color $9.95

WAR AGAINST CRIME AND CRIME PATROL
While their other works may get the glory, **War Against Crime** and **Crime Patrol** were the first creations of the team of Bill Gaines, Johnny Craig, and Al Feldstein, and the last issues of these titles introduced The Crypt-Keeper and The Vault-Keeper. These deluxe editions are not to be missed!
Four Volumes, Slipcase Edition $130.00

ALSO IN JANUARY

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE #44
Even more EC greatness! The Definitive Wally Wood!
See our ad on Page 217 in this issue of **FAN**!

COMPANY NEWS

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT

SMOKE KING

There's an R. Crumb Zippo available for $22.00 (post-paid). Order now.

VEROTIK

Ge Rouge #1 is the latest offering from Glenn Danzig and Verotik. Follow the mature adventures of ge rouge, as the story deals with Voodoo and ol' New Orleans. • From the "Adults Only" wing of Verotik, **Venus Domina-Candlemass Eve. Special Edition** will feature three separate stories, a cover by Dave Stevens, and three alternate covers!

CONVENTION LISTING

AKRON-CANTON COMIC CON
FEBRUARY 1 & 2 1997
Saturday: 11:00 am to 6:00 pm.
Sunday: 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.
Tadmor Hall, I-77 at Exit 120, 3000 Krebs Drive (off Jarvis Rd.) FREE PARKING, Admission $6.00 per day or $10.00 for both days, children 6 and under FREE. Art Contests, Freebies, Door Prizes, (Charity Auctions to benefit the Children's Hospital Medical Center of Akron). For sale will be 1000's of Golden, Silver and Modern Age Comics, Action Figures, Non-Sport Cards, Magic Cards, Gaming Cards, Toys and More. Guests include: **Bob Almond** (**Ultra-Girl, Ultraverse Unlimited, FoxFire, Siren**), **Dan Davis** (**Superboy and the Ravers, Superboy, Guy Gardner**), **Karl Kesel**(**Superboy and the Ravers, Final Night mini series, Daredevil, Adventures of Superman, Superboy**), **Barbara Kese l**(**Ultra-Girl, Alpha-Centurion Spec., Shattered Image, Superboy Ann. #3, X-Patrol from Amalgam**), **Paul Pelletier** (**Superboy and the Ravers, Green Lantern, Outsiders, X-Force #37, Hulk**), **Gordon Purcell** (**X-Files #'s 17, 20, 21, 24 & Ann., Deep Space 9 from Malibu, DC's Star Trek & Star Trek TNG**), **Cary Nord** (**Daredevil, Bruce Wayne: Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D from Amalgam**), **Mike Wieringo** (**Sensational Spider-Man, Robin, Flash, Rogue Mini-series**, Mike is tentative at this time) **Kevin West** (**Ultraverse Unlimited, Foxfire, Siren, Superboy, JL A, X-Factor, Guardians of the Galaxy**), **Chuck Wojtkiewic** (**Imperial Guard** from Marvel, '96 **Legionnaires Ann., JLA**) and even more Guests to be announced. For more information or for dealer info motion call Jeff Harper Productions at 330-499-6056.

TRAVELING SOAPBOX

KILLING THEM ALL FOR A WORLD OF GOOD COMICS

by David Lapham

It's almost epidemic in comics, especially in these tough times, for people to talk about a need for good comics. "There aren't enough 'good' comics" and "What this industry needs is just plain 'good' comics" are comments I'm constantly hearing. Well, lots of people spout about it, but I think it's time to take action. Just how are we supposed to get more "good" comics without first getting rid of all the people producing "bad" comics? All those "bad" writers and artists aren't going to just wake up and learn how to write and draw better, are they? Someone's got to decide who stays and who goes. I nominate me.

The first thing we do is form a group like the Nazis, only with a more noble purpose. We gather up all the artists, line them up, and shoot every third one. Then we do the same with the writers, but we shoot every second one because there are far more pretenders hiding in those ranks. Then we take the real cartoonists, the ones who write and draw their own stuff and we...we leave them alone because many of them are producing the best stuff, and the risk of knocking off a good one is too great. Once we've whittled down to a more manageable group, we rent out a hall at the Waldorf Astoria, squeeze them all in, and teach them to write and draw "good" comics. Someone has to teach this important subject, so, again, I nominate me

Climbing on-stage to address the attentive, held-at-gunpoint crowd, I ask myself, just what is a "good" comic? I think about the comics I like, and how there aren't too many of them. My left hand slowly reaches for the lever which will seal off the room and drop pellets from the ceiling filled with poison gas, asphyxiating everyone. My right hand reaches under the podium for my gas mask.

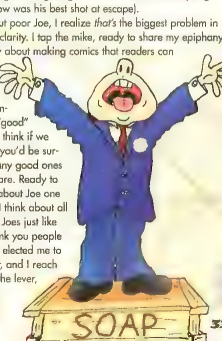
But then I think somebody out there may like these guys. Somebody might think they make pretty good comics. Some of them may have something to say. What's "good" is a highly subjective thing. Maybe the readers should decide what's "good" and what's not all by themselves.....

But can they? Do the readers really stand a chance? Isn't the real problem that beyond "good" or "bad" most comics are unreadable? Maybe what's needed are laws designed to protect the reader from incomprehensible comics. Hey, I have men with automatic weapons. Enforcing a few sensible laws shouldn't be a problem. Breaking these laws would be punishable by various forms of death: Not mentioning the characters' names (arsenic). Expecting the reader to have memorized twelve years of continuity (hanging). Expecting the reader to have read even the previous issue (firing squad). Not complying with the standard left-to-right, up-to-down reading path that the rest of America goes by (hot pans). Actively trying to confuse the reader by using overlapping panels, especially those panels taking a non-rectangular form, e.g., triangular panels, starburst panels, amorphous globs, etc. (ingestion of meal worms). This could be fun.

Now, I know some will find these laws restricting. After all, why limit the form? Sitting before that blank piece of paper, the possibilities seem endless. Will Eisner, maybe the greatest comic creator ever, designs beautiful, innovative, and highly readable pages without confining himself to a grid or even panel borders. But Will Eisner is a genius. If you're a genius, do what you want. Until then, have a story to tell, and tell it clearly (or risk death by, say...aspirin overdosing).

Maybe I should grab an average Joe right off the street, drag him in here, up on-stage, and force everyone to watch him attempt to read a comic. Notice how even the simplest of panel layouts stops him for a second. Then, turning the pages he is confronted by an overlapping panel. Desperate to see what's under it, he begins to sweat. Nudged on by the nozzle of an M-16, he jumps to the next panel, the one the first panel is intruding on. That happens to be the wrong panel and the story starts to make no sense. He is ground to a complete stop when the next page looks like a Picasso on mescaline. Hopelessly lost, he tries to ask questions. "Who's this guy?" he asks. "That's Captain Lemming," they say, looking at Joe like he's got three heads. "Why's he hittin' that other dude?" "Big Bart!" they interrupt "But why is he hitting Big Bart?" The crowd groans. "Look, Joe," they say, "everybody knows Bart's still really miffed that Jupiter Lady jilted him and foiled his plot to take over the Hidden City four years ago in **Jupiter Lady** #289. Then he saw her help Captain Lemming defeat the Beaver Creature in **Giant-Sized Beaver** #1. Putting two and two together, he's been stewing about it ever since, until last issue, when—" Joe's screaming cuts them off as he pushes past the armed guards, making a run for it. (Putting two and two together, Joe, I guess forgetting we were sixteen stories up, figured the window was his best shot at escape).

Thinking about poor Joe, I realize *that's* the biggest problem in comics today: clarity. I tap the mike, ready to share my epiphany. Let's first worry about making comics that readers can follow and understand so they can decide for themselves if it's a "good" comic or not. I think if we could do that, you'd be surprised how many good ones there actually are. Ready to speak, I think about Joe one last time, and I think about all the other poor Joes just like him. Then I think you people shouldn't have elected me to be your leader, and I reach over and pull the lever, dropping the gas pellets.



IN THE POLYBAG!

Shi: The Blood Of Saints

CONCLUDES IN

#21

A FAN Edition comic with every issue of FAN!
— George Washington

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WildC.A.T.S:
Savant Garde
BEGINS IN
OVERSTREET'S
FAN

THE KIDS ARE

A INTERVIEW WITH THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES EDITOR K.C. CARLSON

TIME TAKES A CIGARETTE

It's a common misconception that the youths of today are gun-toting, drug taking, idiotic slackers whose only goals in life revolve around bodily functions and their common household uses. Remember, it's only a misconception (?). Now let's look into the 30th Century. Here teenagers are positive role models: The Legion of Super Heroes and their companion group, the Legionnaires. Back to 1996, today kids are labeled "Generation X", due to a lack of social identity. 1,000 years from now kids will go by names such as LiveWire, XS, and Invisible Kid, establishing a social identity and forever securing their place in history, albeit comic book history. And under the continual guidance of **Legion** editor K.C. Carlson, the future will remain free of gun toting, drug-taking slackers.

What makes the comparison between the 20th and 30th Centuries relevant is the fact that currently half of our intrepid heroes from the future are stuck in the present. Why? "I don't know," says K.C. Carlson, between laughs. "It was something we wanted to do, we wanted to experiment with some of the characters being in the 20th Century and having some of the characters link up with some of the regular DC Universe and meeting Superman and Impulse and others, which is difficult to do in the 30th century." In a time where the likes of a certain Man of Steel and a lone Dark Knight can be seen frequently over head, it would seem that the Legionnaires stuck in 1996 might be a little awestruck. "For the Legion it's a little frustrating for them because so much history has been lost in the thousand years between now and their time. And they're aware of some of the legendary characters like Superman and Batman and Wonder Woman and Flash, but they know very little about them, very few of the records survived throughout history. They're like mythological characters to them in some instances, so the heroes are larger than life, obviously. But it's cool for them to run into the heroes because some of them maybe didn't really believe they ever existed." It's like watching the audience during the Academy Awards. Since it's a time travel story, some of the inevitable questions will arise: Will they change history? Will someone die? Will they even get back to their own time? Will they all get back? Will Will Smith ever get a new sit com? And in typical comic book fashion, we're not telling.

Now let us once again step into our trusty Time-bubble and journey into the future. Here the **Legionnaires** are keeping the universe safe. "They're about ready to face one of the classic **Legion** villains: Mordru," Carlson continues. "Mordru's coming back, and that's going to be a major three-part story that climaxes in **Legionnaires** #50." Also expect the return of the evil Emerald Violet, resulting in some surprising resolutions of her storyline as well as the outcome of several other characters.

TALKING 'BOUT MY GENERATION

"They're all just a bunch of horrible, dysfunctional little bastards," stated British writer Warren Ellis in reference to his **DV8** characters. And it works, but it doesn't work with **Legion**. The trend towards teen angst superhero groups continues to remain popular. Titles like **Gen**^{13} and **Generation X** immerse themselves into dark worlds, why doesn't the **Legion**? "Actually our fans complain that we're too dark," admits Carlson. "The fans that we have right now are really opposed to all of the dark grunginess, so this is like when we rebooted the book and started over with the **Zero Hour** stunt. It was definitely in the minds of all the creators that we wanted to get back to the original concept of the **Legion** in that it was a bright and shiny future and that it was a very optimistic future. The series had wandered so far away from that, and that was the overriding thing that we wanted to get back, the future was an optimistic place and we're going to survive a thousand years. We're bucking the trend obviously, because in every other medium, things are getting very dark and very cyberpunk. We're into having a fun book. That's not to say you can't do dark stuff, but the last year we took a few blows from the fans for the whole **Violet** storyline; a lot of fans felt that was way too dark. So it's a real fine line here. I like **Gen**^{13}. I'm a big fan of it, and I appreciate what they're doing there, but I don't think it would necessarily work with these characters due to the way they've been established over such a long period of time, and trying to change the book into something like that would alienate more people than it would bring to this book."

So trade in your torn jeans and your bad attitudes for a brightly colored costume and Legion flight ring. Get to work kids! ■

FAN

SCOTT BRADEN'S UNTOLD TALES

JLA/AVENGERS

It was one of the most anticipated company crossovers in comic book history. To many, it still is.

Intended to be published by DC Comics in 1983, **JLA/Avengers** was the talk of the industry. After the phenomenal success of the Marvel-produced **X-Men/New Teen Titans**, there was much anticipation on everyone's part that DC was going to throw down the gauntlet and produce an even better book. And with DC enlisting the aid of writer Gerry Conway and artist-extraordinaire George Perez, both fans and professionals were almost assured of it.

Perez, who actually got the chance to exhibit his finished pages of the book at the 1994 Heroes Convention, still believes to this day that no one would've been disappointed.

"**JLA/Avengers** dealt with Kang and the Lord of Time going to the dawn of time and trying to reset history," Perez explains. "This was similar to what was done later in **Crisis on Infinite Earths**, in the sense that they were trying to create one consistent Earth. It would've been created in either Kang's or the Lord of Time's own image, depending on who won the prize. Gerry's original plot dealt with something called 'The Eggs of Time,' which were little bits of time or temporal displacement that were shot through the time continuum and have to be retrieved in various points of history.

"So Kang uses the Avengers as his agents by stating that the Justice League are actually villains trying to get the Eggs for the Lord of Time, with the reverse happening with the Lord of Time, who is saying the same thing to the Justice League. And since, in this particular story, the JLA and the Avengers have never met each other and they don't know if the other person is a villain or not—the stakes are too high for them to take chances. Basically, if they get the respective Eggs first, at least they'll know that they accomplished what needs to be accomplished, and work out all the finer points later."

According to Perez, the Avengers and the JLA were then going to be sent to different times in different locations to get the Eggs. "The Eggs, which resembled big gems, were the size of human beings basically, and you had to catch them before they disappeared. Anyway, Kang and the Lord of Time send their various groups into different times and planets, allowing Gerry and I to do the old Justice League ploy of dividing the groups into small squads, and thus dividing the book into chapters. It also allowed for the various confrontations as well.

"One of the confrontations took place in World War I France, where Captain America, the Scarlet Witch and Starfox ended up meeting Batman, Zatanna and Hawkman. Of course there was that sheer coincidence that every time people go into the various arenas, they always seemed to be matched perfectly [laughter]. So Batman happens to be in the same one that Captain America is in. Ditto Scarlet Witch and Zatanna happening to be in the same one as well. Whether Gerry would've explained that as being part of Kang or the Lord of Time's ploy to make sure that these adversaries would be equal to each other, I don't know. Obviously, it never got that far.

"Looking back, the battle between Scarlet Witch and Zatanna actually was a cheat because Starfox interferes. Starfox beats Hawkman, and then uses his emotional thing to throw Zatanna for a loop. Then Zatanna, who had the upper hand until Starfox came in, easily lost to the Scarlet Witch. With Starfox's help, Scarlet Witch finished it. And in the case of Batman/Captain America, Batman won only momentarily, in time for everyone to realize what's going on. Captain America who mistook the Dark Knight for the old Invaders villain Baron Blood, is a soldier while Batman is a street fighter...so Batman cheats! Batman throws a gas grenade at Cap, which Cap wouldn't have been expecting, especially if they're fighting mano y mano. When I had them fighting hand-to-hand, I kept it fairly even. I just had to find a way that Batman is different than Cap and I figured the soldier/street fighter approach seemed to work well for them.

"The next battle was on Oa—home of the Guardians of the Universe—where the Guardians would've witnessed Hal Jordan battling Captain Marvel to a draw, Wonder Woman beating Hercules, the Beast winning against the Elongated Man, and the Vision defeating the Red Tornado.

"There was also a fight on an asteroid, though I don't remember the significance of why the heroes were there. Anyway, that battle would've come down to The Martian Manhunter defeating She-Hulk, Firestorm beating Iron Man, and Quicksilver literally cheating the Flash out of victory. My reasoning for that was that The Flash may be faster, but Quicksilver was slyer because he used to be a villain. Basically the Flash kept running around the asteroid, hitting Quicksilver every time he kept passing him as he'd go around the asteroid. Finally, Quicksilver has enough, turns around, waits for him, and just decks him [laughter]!

"The last one took place on Galactus' ship, way prior to the destruction of Krypton, in which Galactus was going to consume the planet Krypton. There, The Atom would beat Ant-Man, the Wasp would beat Black Canary, while Superman and Thor would fight to a draw. Superman, when he met Thor, had no idea who Thor was. So when Thor threw his hammer at

...really had no reason to duck it. So when an enchant... ...it him, it hurt him...badly. And from that point on, ... not to get hit again [laughter]! Afterwards, when ... got their wits about them, Superman and the others ... to reprogram Galactus' computer and save the ... planet—at least for the meantime anyway."

Essentially," Perez confesses, "all the heroes would realize ... working for the same purpose, and they go to the ... of Time and try to set things right. I believe the final ... ...ned Green Arrow and Hawkeye shooting special ... towards each other so that the arrows hit tip-to-tip; a ... in a million shot basically, proving the marksmanship of ... And then everything would be righted."

The confrontations, which were the most exciting parts of the ..., became its downfall. According to Perez, the powers ... Marvel had a problem with the outcome of the bat... ... battles themselves. This was even pointed out in an editorial printed in **Marvel Age** #19, Marvel's former com... ...produced fanzine. On the other hand, Perez and DC ... to differ, saying that what holes there were in the origi... ...could've easily been ironed out so that the book could ... print.

Perez remembers, "Gerry did the entire plot and I was ... along. There were noticeable plot holes ... characterization holes that I tried to explain as I was going ... I've done that before with other plots, where I keep the ... intact but at the same time, tried to make some sense of ... ...I think was Gerry's strongest plot characterwise or ... ...likewise. But, I dealt with that before, so basically my job ... ...fix it as I went along. Some of what happened, obviously, was that the plot that had to be approved was the plot that had nothing to do with me. That was Gerry's plot—a plot that I knew was flawed. And since I made no written plot for myself, they had nothing to judge on but the original."

Perez pauses for a second, "Roy Thomas did come in afterwards when there were problems with the plot, and tried to do a 'redo.' Roy added a chapter that took care of one of the flaws in the original plot, which was giving Aquaman something to do in the story. He put Aquaman in a typically 'Roy Thomas scene' (laughter) where the King of the Seas met the World War II Sub-Mariner. But, as I think back, nothing else was really changed that dramatically."

But even with Thomas' "new" plot approved, the project was finally canceled. Perez was then asked to pencil a second **New Teen Titans/X-Men** crossover for DC. Though DC was very supportive through the **JLA/Avengers** imbroglio, he had little desire to work on another crossover so soon. "The thing was, when you killed one project, it pretty much severed a lot of the cooperation between the two companies. It was out of my hands. I really wanted to do the **JLA/Avengers** though, and the only reason that I would've followed it with another **X-Men/Titans**, was because the first one was so successful and people were curious as to why the person who did **X-Men/Titans** (Walt Simonson) was not involved with either book at the time. The reason was, of course, that Marvel was producing that book and I wasn't working for Marvel at the time. The second one would've been DC's book, and I would've been involved with that one. But, I still wanted to do **JLA/Avengers** first and foremost, and when that project got lost, I really had no interest even if the companies were willing to work together on the second **X-Men/Titans**."

More than a decade later though, Perez *has* agreed to script the upcoming **Superman/Silver Surfer**, a Marvel-produced crossover book of cosmic proportions. DC and Marvel have also buried the hatchet with their tremendously successful **DC/Marvel** limited series and their critically-acclaimed Amalgam books. Still, Perez wishes today that he had the chance to finish what might've been his definitive work.

"We missed out on something. It would've been a fan-boy's dream." ■

SYMPATHY
FOR THE
BY JEFF DILLON
DEVIL

Please Allow Me To Introduce Myself...

So, the devil and you're trying to take over the world, wreak bad soul, yadda yadda, and for years now you've been ahead, if just isn't working. What are you up to? Change addresses, move, get some bodge, go to the Xavier Institute? Bingo! Guess what kids, that's just who he does in the Top Cow/Marvel crossover aptly named **Devil's Reign**.

This mini-series stretches between the two universes' parts of mayhem, and a complete change in the Top Cow Universe. But even as we ponder the ramifications of this epic crossover, we ask one question. To answer this sweeping question, it's right to the BEGINNING... whoa not that far back Writer Marc Silvestri and artist Mat Simonson what he thinks. Why Wolverine's writing the first part of the tale is attempts to lead line in deep boomin' voice like a great movie trailer)

Marc Silvestri: Well, in the Top Cow universe, we don't seem to have really bad guys. Thanks to this crossover, we're going to have some really bad guys running around (laughs). All right, thanks, good night. Seriously, in a nutshell, that's what's going to happen. This crossover from the Marvel Universe into the Top Cow Universe is going to involve several different characters. The whole thing involves the Silver Surfer and Mephisto. And if you look, I'm doing, like, **Weapon Zero/Silver Surfer** issues. The first chapter of this eight-part crossover is my issue, essentially. Mephisto moves from the Marvel Universe into the Top Cow Universe. And he discovers that the Marvel Universe, where there are many, many goddesses and a variety of figures who are pretty wholesome and the raking in of souls, there's no comparison to the Top Cow Universe. The need is wide open for evil. This could be a really nasty place to be. So he's going to be doing what Lucifer Morningstar has done, in a lot of time, which is trying to cause the fall of some people and some people's souls and I guess, essentially, he goes over as Lucifer figures have done in the morning, as a tempter, and a provocateur and all that stuff and begins to work in the Top Cow Universe. What was a simple explanation. But let me ask you this: is it a permanent thing? I don't believe so. I'm not saying anything away on that score. But his Top Cow Universe, his seducing proposals to the Darkness and some of the other titles. Since I've been in my own book, **Weapon Zero**, I've been pretty widely aware of what's going on in some of the Top Cow Universe, but will have a lot more on life and death after this crossover is over. It sounds serious. And if I haven't pointed it out, **Weapon Zero** for Top Cow. So, to recap, devil, for all intents and purposes, moves from the Marvel Universe into the Top Cow Universe. Chaos ensues, for some details. We can't give you much as **Weapon Zero**. But this time he gets his Silver Surfer. That we can tell you about.

...But Wealth And Fame

Of course, I'm supposed to give away too much stuff. Basically, one of **Weapon Zero**'s characters is killed by evil in the course of the crossover. In the first issue and coming out the other end. So when the crossover is finished, he will no longer be in **Weapon Zero**'s team. Basically, we're going to have to learn down lightly. I'm introducing a new character right before the crossover, a character who will act as an adjunct to the team and then probably a team member.

But with about the Silver Surfer? He's one of the original icons of the Marvel Universe. Lee & Kirby created him, that's got to be a little imposing.

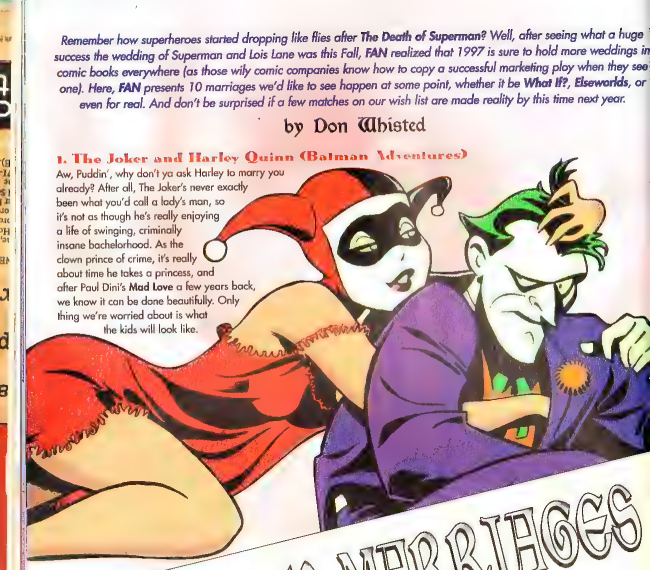
MS: I guess. (Laughs) Laughs. Wait. I'm sure does laugh a lot, don't he. It's a very big pressure to me, the Surfer's always been a couple of my favourite creations. The original Surfer that Jack Kirby and Stan Lee wrote, clearly was an alien. One of the reasons he was so powerful and remains powerful is that he discovered all of these things that, to him, were quite alien. Human emotions, including the good and bad. Albeit Alicia Masters' character was frustrated that they canonized these foreign morals. And I like the over time, over-canonized surfer dude went from [illegible] to earth to a supporting character on 3rd Rock from the Sun. Since the Surfer became a regular in the Marvel Universe, and his own book, he really became quite a different character. I'm trying to write something of a balance between the two that's done in the past, and not really focusing too much on the other hand, in the way, I'm doing. He's using the instrument that brings Mephisto into the Top Cow Universe. Wait explains. "But since it's not a story I'm writing, a lot of the parts of my issue with the Surfer is fairly self-contained. But it's still really fun to draw and write him."

I Lay Tracks For Troubadours

And for those of us who can remember the classic rivalry between the Silver Surfer and Mephisto, you can expect it to happen this time too, but: "You might say this time around Mephisto pulls the wool over the Surfer's eyes." What? The bad guys win? Already the character can't say that for the chapters down the road, I don't know it's imminent, but I know that at least in my chapter, Mephisto comes up slightly ahead in the race down to Satan Inn. Speaking of which, one of the more prominent names in comics right now is doing the art chores on part one of the little project. So how is it working with Marc Silvestri? "I can't wait to get the artwork so that I can start writing the actual dialogue. It's exciting for me because I like Marc's stuff. I try to pursue many good-looking girls in the strip as possibly can because I don't think anybody draws sexier women in comics than Marc. I like his full range of work. This is the first time I've written **Weapon Zero** where Joe Benitez hasn't drawn it. So even though I love Joe's stuff, and I have a great time working with him, now I'm very curious to see what another artist will do with these characters." And since Mr. Silvestri has been busy as it's interesting, I'm in the full quite line of his work compares to Joe Benitez's. Team artists have a very distinct and very readily seen on, so set the standard for **Weapon Zero**. Joe gives the book a really specific look that Top Cow really adds to with the color they do," comments Wait. "I haven't seen any of the pages yet, but I'm really curious to see what they look like. I'm sure it will look cool, and I'm sure it will have a little bit of a different flavor, but one of the reasons I write comics as well as draw them is because it's always interesting to see what other artists do. Even when I write things, I have some idea of what I'd like it to look like when I'm writing it. I'm not to dogmatic the artwork of somebody else with a closed mind, because I know what they do with stuff is not going to be what I would do with it. That makes it exciting and refreshing, whereas if I drew everything, I'd [illegible] overwork and I know where it's going to be. With other artists involved, you never know what you're going to get. And I'm really looking forward to seeing what Marc does." So are we, Wait. So are we. ■

Remember how superheroes started dropping like flies after ***The Death of Superman****? Well, after seeing what a huge success the wedding of Superman and Lois Lane was this Fall,* ***FAN*** *realized that 1997 is sure to hold more weddings in comic books everywhere (as those wily comic companies know how to copy a successful marketing ploy when they see one). Here,* ***FAN*** *presents 10 marriages we'd like to see happen at some point, whether it be* ***What If?****,* ***Elseworlds****, or even for real. And don't be surprised if a few matches on our wish list are made reality by this time next year.*

by Don Whisted



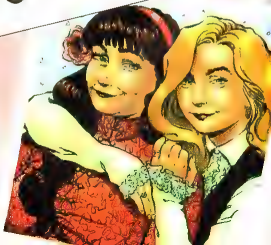
The Top 10 Marriages We'd Like to See

1. The Joker and Harley Quinn (Batman Adventures)

Aw, Puddin', why don't ya ask Harley to marry you already? After all, The Joker's never exactly been what you'd call a lady's man, so it's not as though he's really enjoying a life of swinging, criminally insane bachelorhood. As the clown prince of crime, it's really about time he takes a princess, and after Paul Dini's **Mad Love** a few years back, we know it can be done beautifully. Only thing we're worried about is what the kids will look like.

2. Francine and Katchoo (Strangers in Paradise)

Is the industry ready for the first lesbian wedding in comic books? Sure, it's the nineties, after all, and these two kids were just made for each other. Of course, they'd have to road trip it and go to Georgia or somewhere that such unions are legally recognized, but just imagine the wacky hijinks that would ensue. All of it could culminate with a wedding on *Oprah* and David in drag as the bride's maid.



4. Batman and Talia (Batman)

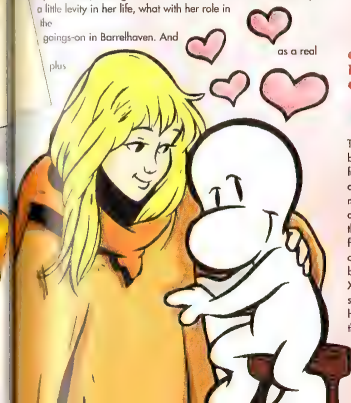
Ok, let's get this out of the way right from the start: Talia is the only woman for Batman. They complement each other perfectly, and the irony of the Bat marrying his greatest villain's daughter is fantastic. Would this mean that Batman finally assumes the mantle of Ra's Al-Ghul? Why not? The possibilities here are limitless, though we suspect the results would be anything but wedded bliss.

5. Bruce Wayne and Selina Kyle (Batman)

Ok, let's get this out of the way right from the start: Selina (Catwoman) is the only woman for Bruce (Batman). They complement each other perfectly, and the effect the pair of them could have on Gotham would be enormous. Would they know each other's secret identity? Would Selina live at Wayne Manor? The old Earth Two union aside, this is something that's been a long time coming.

3. Bone and Thorn (Bone)

Okay, okay, we know they're different species (though we're not sure that even Jeff Smith knows exactly what Bone is), but that Fone Bone is just so cute, what girl could resist? And Thorn could obviously use a little levity in her life, what with her role in the goings-on in Barrelhaven. And as a real plus



6. Angel and Psylocke (X-Men)

They've been dating for months now and are two of the most likable mutants in any of the X-books. Plus they're a great pair, whether fighting together or just hanging out at the mansion. And they're both angst-ridden (who in the X-books isn't?), so they can console each other when the next huge mutant tragedy hits. And their kids would make great additions to **Generation X**

7. Wonder Woman and Superman (DC)

We've got a feeling the marriage between these two may be the end result of DC's **Elseworld** series **Whom Gods Destroy**, but that doesn't make it any less appealing. Why not introduc into "real" continuity? Clark either divorces Lois or she gets herself killed off and a depres Man of Steel shacks up with Diana Prince. The two can invest in their future and not gro old together.

8. Daredevil and Elektra (Marvel)

Since Elektra's now officially back in her own book, it's about time she and Daredevil rekindle their interest in each other. As hot as **Daredevil** has been, getting their respective books together into a shared story-arc seems a good idea at this point. Imagine the waves Elektra would make in Matt Murdock's current world. And with the two of them together, there's not a villain in the Big Apple who'd stand a chance.

9. Archie and Betty (Archie Comic

Granted, the two of them would have to grow up instantly finally get out of high school, and, yes, there may have bee future stories where they've grown older and been married, let's make it for real. Veronica can crash the wedding at jus right moment, Jughead can lose the ring, and Mr. Weather can preside over the ceremony. And then there can be a w new adult line of Archie comics, cutting into Veratik's share the market.

10. Jubilee and Robin (Marvel & DC)

One of the fans' favorite things about the whole **Marvel Vs. DC** marriage of convenience was the romance between these two lonely superhero kids. Though they're both still too young, at least get them dating and going to proms and whatever it is the kids are doing these days. And for a preview of their kids, look no further than Amalgam's Sparrow in **Legends of the Dark Claw**.

TRAVELING SOAPBOX

SOUL SUCKING

by Fabian Nicieza

Since becoming ACCLAIM Editor-in-Chief I've tried really hard to listen to what the retail and fan base in our industry has to say. I felt, and still feel, their opinions are vital to our success, since they're the ones selling and buying the product. Our Acclaim sales force, through Diamond Comic Distributors, is talking to retailers every week, and we have conference calls with the reps every Wednesday to hear what the retailers have to say. We've heard a lot of very useful things to help make our product and pro grams better. We've seen the sales force succeed in selling more copies of the books into the stores. For the consumers, we've sent out loads of preview copies of our comics and we've been a constant presence on the internet, since we're interested in the feedback our readers have to offer.

This is what I've learned so far:

Retailers say they want us to:

A) go left

B) go right

C) go up the middle

D) all of the above

Readers say they want us to:

A) go up

B) go down

C) stay level

D) all of the above

Face it, us? Honestly, no. The point is, if we lined up 100 people we'd get 90 different opinions, 9 "I don't knows" and 1 "I hate you because you stuck me with Gold Logo books."

We have tried to do everything right. As I write this (November 11th), I am really psyched about how things are starting to shape up (we had very realistic expectations and we knew it was going to be a slow word-of-mouth build on the Valiant Heroes relaunch). Numbers on **X-O Manowar**, **Ninjak**, and **Shadowman** all came in almost exactly where we were predicting. Not enough to make Scott Lobdell worry that his X-istence was in jeopardy, but healthy and hearty enough to make everyone out there say, "Hey, they're still alive!" Even sales figures on **Turok: The Empty Souls** came in on target, proving a pleasant surprise, since it's a $3.95 product.

And the sales figures would have looked even **better** if Diamond had counted our "free goods" copies as part of the total (we did a "buy 10, get 3 free" program on #1 issues). Hell, retailers are selling them, but we're not being allowed to count them as copies shipped. That's a frustration for another time, perhaps, and an internal business matter which would mostly harm all of you. I just thought I'd sleaze it into print anyway to make people aware the Valiant Heroes books shipped more copies out and are selling more copies in stores than those monthly distributor/magazine charts will tell you.

So what happened in the last week to put me in a foul mood (besides a 101 people running through my house in preparation for my sister-in-law's wedding)?

The numbers on **Troublemakers** #1 came in.

Low.

Not low to survive more than a few issues, if you take normal retailer ordering patterns into account. This bothers me, not because it's one of our new Valiant Heroes titles, nor just because it's a book I'm writing and am very proud of, not even because it features art by two guys who I think should soon be very well-regarded in those ubiquitous "Top Ten Artist" teams, nor even because I've come close, but have yet to write a story which makes my drill-sergeant editor, Lynaire Thompson, cry

It bothers me because **I know the book is going to disappear from** retailer shelves so **fast that the book may never get a chance to** develop a reader base because it will be so scarce!

The frustration I feel is not resentful of the comic shops, because I'm well aware of how tough their monthly ordering process is. I know a new title from a struggling company with unknown artists and no boobs on the cover is cause for conservative orders. But I also know the heart, soul, and collective spirit that is going into the pages of **Troublemakers** is the kind of work that creates a positive buzz among readers.

Which in turn, creates an interest.

Which creates demand.

And then where is the supply?

I've seen too many good books die out in the last few years because the readers who wanted to buy issue #2 or #3, the reader who heard about a new title two weeks too late, couldn't find this book anywhere. Out of sight, out of mind.

Well, some might say, if it sells out real quick, then you can go back to press to meet demand. It's always a very fine line between generating enough demand to require an additional print run and just enough demand to say, "Sorry, we're all out." And by then, it might be too late to positively influence orders on subsequent issues.

As both a writer and an editor, I've had books canceled on me before. Sometimes I wanted them canceled and sometimes I didn't. I've even walked away from books I hated and books that I loved writing. Never has a book meant as much to me in terms of the things I wanted to say, how I wanted to say them and who I wanted to say them to than **Troublemakers** does. The very thought that the book might not get a fair shot in this diffi cult marketplace is infuriating. The thought that the comics medium might be denied the opportunity to see two hugely talented young guys like Kenny Martinez and Anibal Rodriguez develop and grow as an art team is depressing.

I know there's a fan base for my work out there. I won't even pretend to place a quantitative number on it, and I have never placed any kinds of qualitative assertions on my own work, but I know there are people who will read and want to read the books that I write. And I also fully expect there are more of those people out there than quantities ordered on **Troublemakers** #1

There comes a point where creative enthusiasm and business reality butt heads. We—the collective "we," being comic creators—don't really do this for the money (that proved a short-lived unexpected bounty for a lucky few) and we don't do this for fame or adulation (again, at the end of the day, most of us still have to take out our own garbage or regrout the bathtub). We do it because we need to entertain people. We do it because we want to put something on the table which our readers can chew on. We do it because we have to.

Sometimes, we lose sight of that in order to pay the rent and earn a living. Other times, speaking for myself only, as is the case with **Troublemakers**, we do it because we want to leave something behind for others. I want a reader to take something out of each and every issue of this book. Sometimes it'll be a "big thing," other times just a "small thing." I want this to be a book I can show my daughter in five years and say,

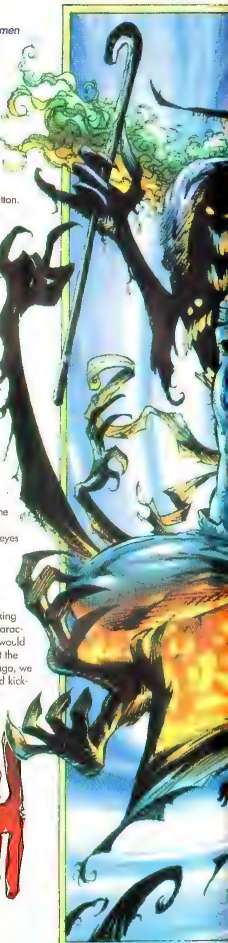
"Here, these are some of your Dad's views on life." And I want her to be able to read them and have gained something as a result beyond just being merely entertained. Preachy? Yeah. Schmaltzy? Definitely. But that's the way I feel.

And I know that if you're a fan of **New Warriors**, **Power Pack**, **Astro City**, **Gen^{13}**, **Generation X**, even **Bone** and **Archie**, then there will be something for you in **Troublemakers**.

When Benn Ray called me up to ask me about writing this column, I didn't know exactly what it was going to be about. I apologize for turning it into little more than an ad, but Benn did say I could write about anything I wanted to.

Well, I decided to write about something I care about. It happens to be a new book I'm writing. It's called **Troublemakers**. The first issue is on sale in late December. I hope you give it a try. If you do, I guarantee you won't be disappointed.

*Are you looking for the perfect combination of monsters, conspiracy, and men with ambitions of ruling the world? **The Tenth** will be the book for you. Conceived and drawn by Tony Daniel, written by Beau Smith, **The Tenth** promises to pack a one-two punch of comic power.*



FAN: SO WHAT'S THE TENTH?

TONY DANIEL: The Tenth refers to one character, but it's actually the title of the story that we're doing here. The story is about pure evil. It's slightly complicated to get it all in one little sentence, but the Tenth refers to these creatures that were created by a madman—he made ten creatures and nine of them were pure evil. The tenth one was used for his own soul to go into. It didn't quite work out that way because the tenth subject was essentially a good person, and that's where everything goes wrong—he's not the actual abomination that Dark wanted to create.

BEAU SMITH: The book deals with genetic holocaust and with a madman at the button. We have this guy, Rhazes Dark, who's immortal and has been around for thousands of years. To the general public he seems like a great benefactor. He's trying to harness nuclear power to cure the ills of the world and to do all this, he's built the city of Springdale in the mountains of Colorado. Everyone in the city works for the Darklon Corporation, which he owns. What he's doing under the guise of all this is preparing the world for genetic holocaust. He will set off nuclear bombs and they will change everyone in the world into his mutated minions. The actual character, The Tenth, came about as Dark has tried nine other experiments to come up with his ultimate field general to lead his military once he tries to take the world.

Not the eighth...

WILL HE GO UP AGAINST THE OTHER NINE?

TONY: Eventually he will meet all nine abominations. He doesn't meet them all at the same time of course, but we plan to trickle them in slowly. We're starting off with the mini-series to see what the response is. We think it's going to go well, and we're anticipating an ongoing series

BEAU: In the first issue, we meet one of the nine, Killcrow, who is sent out to bring the Tenth back in. Crows are his transient eyes, and he sends hoards of them out, to kill, to search, or whatever, and he can see through their eyes what they see.

Not the ninth...

HOW DID THIS ALL COME ABOUT?

BEAU: It started at the Pittsburgh Con last year. Tony and I were both there promoting **Blood Feud** and **Spawn**. After hours, we were sitting around and talking about stuff, and Tony had mentioned that he had characters that he would like to bring to life. He asked if I would consider writing them when we both got the time. We left it at that. A few months ago, we got to talking about it again and started kicking around some ideas. Tony had fabulous ideas and character designs, and we started putting flesh to the skeleton.

THE TENTH

by Karl Glogauer

TONY: Beau is helping me flesh it out, but he's also helping me guide this in the right direction. I pretty much have a lot of raw ideas and Beau is really making my ideas materialize. I have a basic idea of what I want to do, but I don't know how to really put it together in the literary sense. Beau can really make my ideas come together and tie them all in so that they make sense. It seems to be working out really well.

BEAU: It's not gonna be a horror book, it's not actually a superhero book, it's a cross between both. We really want people, when they read it, to get creeped out. Not grossed out...creeped out.

I KNOW I'VE BEEN SLEEPING WITH THE LIGHTS ON EVER SINCE I TALKED TO THESE TWO...BEWARE!

First The Tenth was a comic, now The Tenth is a Contest!

The hot new book from Image is sure to make waves throughout the industry, and **FAN** is giving you the chance to be a part of it. Just enter The Tenth Contest and you could be drawn by Tony Daniel with The Tenth!

Grand Prize: One winner will be drawn by artist Tony Daniel with The Tenth in an original piece of art. The winner will also receive a set of **The Tenth** mini-series signed by the creative team, and one of the color guides from **The Tenth** #1 signed by Tony!

First Prize: Five winners will each receive the complete **The Tenth** mini-series signed by the creative team.

Second Prize: Five winners will each receive signed copies of **The Tenth** #1.

Just send in the contest entry or your name, address, and age on a postcard to Gemstone Publishing, Inc., The Tenth Contest, 1966 Greenspring Drive, Suite 405, Timonium, MD, 21093.

Make me The First prize winner in The Tenth Contest!

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Chuck May: Letterer
Charles Satterlee: Artist
Ronn Stern: Creator/Penciller

Ronn Stern: Creator/Penciller
Trol Stern: Series Producer
Co-Publishers

Ronn Stern:
Creator/Penciller
George Perez:
Cover inker for the series.

INDY PRESS PROFILE

AA² ENTERTAINMENT

Ronn Stern, an illustrator from Richmond, Virginia, along with his life-long partner and wife, Troi Stern, decided to self-publish. They established AA² Entertainment (pronounced A squared) and then set out to publish **Agony Acres,** a story Ronn had written in January of '95. He had even penciled a complete first issue. Then, while at the '95 Chicago Comi-Con in July, Ronn met Chuck Satterlee, a talented writer, who believed **Agony Acres** was a story that could turn heads. Ronn knew that Chuck, having been raised in Chicago and possessing the dagger determination of a pit bull, was the right writer for **AA.** Ronn then brought a very talented computer colorist, Robert Raynor, on board as the series cover, colorist. So began the adventure...

"Self-publishing is all time consuming and can be financially draining, but the rewards of seeing all of your hard work and efforts in its final form is very satisfying," says Troi Stern, Series Producer. The positive response from many fans for **AA** has been overwhelming as well as the reviews from top comic professionals such as **Joe Quesada, Paul Kupperberg, Jim Shooter, Billy Tucci, Tony Isabella** and **Cliff Biggers.**

George Perez liked **Agony Acres** so much he offered to ink the rest of the cover for the series. **Nonie Whipple** did a pin-up in #1, **Lee Sirrazzewski** wrote a short story for #2, and **BUZZ** has done a pin-up for #3. In addition there will be pin-ups linked by **Jimmy Palmiotti** and **Jerry Ordway.**

What's all the hubbub about **Agony Acres**, you ask? **Agony Acres** is a great yarn by the nape of your neck murder mystery set against a back drop of virtual reality. "**Agony** is the sport of tomorrow, where racers compete against one another in the virtual death," says creator/penciler Ronn Stern. Pain is unrealistic, no "real" and, when a racer surpasses his pain threshold, he is killed in the race. Problems arise when the athletes begin to die in reality.

Soon, when the story begins to take care of many twists, a Miami-ade detectives, Inga Sullivan and Turtle Wong are called on to solve the mystery behind Agony Acres. The two detectives pursuit culminates at a secret meeting from Nigel Wyndstone, the astroport owner of the Acres, to solve a conundrum. An ostrich racketeering scheme! The ramifications of the events continue. Lead Jeri Buddy and fiancee Marissa the truth not only, the cost, the money, routine de vivre & economics, but through the story quality of these own reward, power!

Agony Acres is a 4-issue limited series. It will premiere some time in mid-fall and each environmental theme. It is worth buying a ticket. **F**

A Girl's Guide to Dating Comic Guys

by Cassandra Bodicker

SOME SINGLE PEOPLE GET ESPECIALLY LONELY AS THE HOLIDAYS APPROACH. I WAS RECENTLY SITTING AROUND A LOCAL WATERING HOLE WITH SOME OF MY GUY FRIENDS LISTENING TO THEM LAMENT OVER HOW THERE WAS NOBODY AVAILABLE FOR THEM TO DATE. ONE OF THE GUYS SAID, "I WOULDN'T MATTER IF THIS WHOLE PLAC WAS FILLED WITH SINGL WOMEN, CHICKS DON'T DI COMIC BOOK GUYS." M FIRST REACTION WAS T SCOFF AND REMIND TH

GUYS THAT I'M A SINGLE FEMALE AND I FIND COMIC GUYS VERY ATTRACTIVE. OF COURSE, I THEN HAD TO EXPLAIN HOW WE HAD ALREADY CROSSED INTO THE DREADED "FRIEND ZONE," AND THAT'S WHY I COULDN'T DATE ANY OF THEM. HOWEVER, I WAS STILL TROUBLED BECAUSE SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT AN ACTIVE COMIC READER IS JUST TOO GEEKY TO GET A DATE. THIS JUST ISN'T TRUE; COMIC GUYS HAVE MANY QUALITIES THAT MAKE THEM, AT THE VERY LEAST, DATEABLE.

RECREATIONAL READERS

Comic guys read recreationally. Sure this is obvious, but it's more than just reading through a comic book here, leafing through a price guide there. To a comic guy, reading is a simple, enjoyable ritual that they cherish. And as we all know, a well-read man is an intelligent man. They choose to give their full attention to something that feeds their interests. In the chaos of daily life, they are able to set aside time to sit still, kick back and give themselves to a story. Comic readers know that quiet reading time is valuable. Trust me, there's nothing like spending a sunny Saturday afternoon inside reading a pile of fresh ly bought comics, and comic guys know this. So, if they can find the time to dedicate to reading, they can surely find the time to dedicate to a girl.

POSITIVE LIFE LESSONS

Comic guys also learn life lessons while reading their favorite stories. Comics throughout the years have focused their themes around the human struggles that plague every man. Talk to a comic guy he'll tell you that notions such as loyalty, honor, teamwork, and love are scattered through many different storylines. Surely, after years of reading such positive and affirming work, they've made some positive impression on the guy. On the other hand, words like hate, obsession, revenge, and Verotik appear frequently in comics as well, so maybe this isn't such a good point.

VARIED INTERESTS

Many people believe that a person's personality/interests are molded in childhood in part by what they are exposed to. Since comics are so diverse, a young comic book reader's mind can be introduced to an assortment of subjects all wrapped up in a brightly colored wrapper. Comics make learning fun! Once the comic has gotten a young boy interested in a subject, there's no stopping the adult man in making that subject his own, pursuing it any way he sees fit. For example, my friend Tom swears that his interest in mythology was first sparked by a storyline in **X-Men**. Today Tom teaches high school history and is an avid reader of Joseph Campbell.

I'm telling you ladies, get to know a comic book reader. The probability is that you'll have something in common. Think about it—if you word associate starting with the word "comic," it can take you in many different directions:

"comics"—"animation"—"film"—"music"—"politics"—"government"—"conspiracy"—"vigilantism"—"vampirism"—"books"—"comics"

See, something for everybody, and it all ties back to comics.

THEY HAVE COOL STUFF

Another reason to date a comic guy is that they tend to have cool stuff. Most are not exclusively comic collectors, and they really know how to make use of their disposable income, and a guy who knows how to spend his money is a great guy to hang out with. At an average comic guy's house, you're liable to find (besides his parents) books, records, t-shirts, videos, posters, decoder rings, lunch boxes, collectors cards, and last but by no means least, the ever-popular action figures. If you're anything like I am, you're sure to covet most of their personal belongings and not know which to borrow first. [Speaking of which, a good friend of mine is willing to pay a *reasonable* price for one of those 12" Ace Frehley KISS dolls. If you can help, please contact Benn Ray at this fine publication.]

ART APPRECIATION

An important trait I come across in almost every comic fan I meet is an appreciation for art. Any reader can surely find something to their liking since comic book art encompasses everything from pencil sketches to full paintings to photography. Comic book illustrations are more than mere illustration, they are art. Now on the down side, your average comic reader may not be able to identify a Monet from a Picasso, and true, they may spend the majority of the afternoon at the local comic shop and then decide to race walk through the National Gallery before closing. No big deal really. A man who appreciates art is generally a sensitive guy who will appreciate you.

On the upside, don't worry, most comic guys are aware that the ability to squeeze a 42-20-36 body into a size 4 bathing suit is a special power reserved for our 2-dimensional comic book heroines and the female cast to *Boywatch*. Remember, you can never look too sexy when you're fighting crime

A HEALTHY IMAGINATION

The costume reference reminds me of another good reason to hang out with comic guys. Comics help to cultivate the imaginations of their readers, and a moderate dose of fantasy is important in today's reality.

For instance, Joey and Brian were these two comic guys in my neighborhood. They were into role-playing games and always had the best costumes at Halloween. Once, in middle school, they dressed as Daredevil and the Silver Surfer. Being a young self-conscious tomboy, I envied them because they were able to lose themselves within their alter-egos. They'd really tune into their character and ride it out, their body language changed, their movements were powerful and deliberate, their voices became commanding and superheroish. It was cool. I look back on those days and wonder about Joey and Brian. Do they still read comics? I hope so. Do they still have the ability to walk around in a world which exists between the pages of a comic book and their imaginations? I hope so. Would Joey still put on that skintight Daredevil costume and become The Man Without Fear if I asked him? Boy, do I ever hope so! Well, I think you know where I'm headed with this...so let me refocus.

CUTE EXPRESSIONS

There's the devilish look they get in their eyes when they find a copy of **Preacher** #1 mispriced for $1.50. They truly relish the fact that they're getting away with something. I don't know why, but I like that in a person. Another look comes to their faces suddenly, right after they consciously realize that they have been passionately lobbying for 30 minutes on the specific reasons why Lobo could, without a doubt, kill Wolverine in hand to hand combat. That frozen apologetic/embarrassed expression is priceless. There's also a content look they get when they know they can finally settle down to read a whole four-part series in its entirety for the first time. It's as if a small personal quest had been successfully wrapped up.

IN TOUCH WITH THE INNER CHILD

Now I've heard people (my dad) argue that any adult who still reads comics is dodging adulthood and clinging to childish things. To these people, I say, "Damn right I'm dodging adulthood and clinging to childish things." I don't see anything wrong with that. Being an adult kind of sneaks up on you anyway; one day you're upset because you know your parents are going to freak because you scratched their car, the next day you freak because you know your insurance is going to skyrocket after you rear-end another vehicle. Growing up just happens. What's wrong with bringing something from your childhood into your adult life? If you find comfort in it and nobody gets hurt, what's the problem? It's all good. Sure, I can discuss the pros and cons of affirmative action with a fellow, but I'd also be interested in his take on how Matt Murdock could have possibly forgiven Karen after she betrayed him to King Pin. I still get fired up over this one.

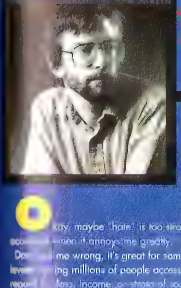
GEEKS ARE COOL

So, to any ladies out there, I hope that I've somehow persuaded you to give comic book guys a dating chance. Sure, go ahead, call them geeks. It's the '90s; thanks to Bill Gates, the guys in Weezer, and David Duchovny, geeky guys are IN. (I think I read that in **Teen Beat**, **Details**, or **Sassy**, so it must be true.) Forget about those lunkhead jocks! Lose those 3-piece-suits and corporate whipping boys who fill them out! Go hang out at a comic shop near you and wait until a comic guy comes in who lives up to your general (don't be too picky) standards. It'll be like shooting fish in a barrel.

I know this may be preaching to the choir, so fellas, feel free to photocopy the article and give it to the girl of your dreams. It couldn't hurt.

Ladies, having trouble on the dating scene? Men, are you yearning for a girl who just doesn't seem to give you the time of day? Feel free to write me for advice:

Dear Cassie,
c/o Overstreet's FAN
1966 Greenspring Dr.,
STE 405
Timonium, MD 21093



behind the LINES

WHY I HATE THE INTERNET

by Jeff Mariotte

Okay, maybe "hate" is too strong a word. But there are [illegible] even it annoys me greatly.

Don't get me wrong, it's great for some things. E-mail is a great leveler, ing millions of people access to one another without regard to fancy, income, or stage of society. It's also a convenient way to send messages for documents—cheaper and faster than a phone call, sometimes, and you get a record of the message to boot. And the fact that fans can reach me and I can reach them is so effectively.

But the level of discourse has dropped by several notches from just a few years ago. Almost nobody I know gets or writes letters anymore, including me, and I used to write great letters. Now it seems people are e-mails, and something about the nature of electronic mail seems to have dumbed down the average user to a subterranean level. Spelling and grammar are out the window (and, yes, I understand that some e-mail systems don't allow people to correct once they're entered—but I don't understand why that is).

And anonymity is there so much stupidity and exhibit on the Internet. I'm not in e-mail-land or "chat rooms," but some of the most obvious examples of it are perpetrated anonymously by the wonders of "screen names." Many of these anonymous people, cringing behind their fake identities, are the ones you want to slap upside the head and send back to remedial English. Now I'll come out of the woodwork to hurl insults at each other, with no thought to the feelings or intelligence of targets. I have no objection to aggressive criticism of what you see on the net is inappropriate, and just plain wrong, and that stuff gets in the way of it. Criticism, which is written by people willing to own up to their thoughts, people who have put some effort into figuring out what is good and what is bad.

I mean, the e-mail I get, but free form opinions of the people who have read and if a message is really badly written, the meaning gets skewed in my mind. I also frequent the areas on America Online and CompuServe where people tend to discuss comics and Homage books, and the same thing applies. And of course, if someone uses his or her real name, or otherwise identifies herself, then my regard for that person's statements automatically much higher than it is for the cowardly anonymous public.

The Internet is also the place of choice for people to spread wild rumors, because they spread faster than they do in any previously known or mainstream. The more outrageous it is, there's a tip—if you see anything on the Internet and it's purported for [illegible] or a publication you know, or more of the parties involved, it's probably not true.

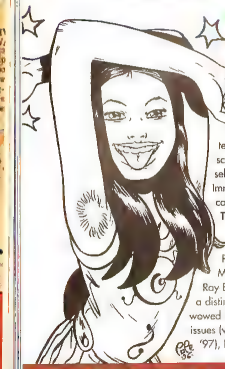
Another Internet area where I've been disappointing seeds frustration lately is the World Wide Web, which I've been advertised is nothing more than a new method for millions of people around the world to simultaneously waste their time, rather than everyone having to waste time in individual and creative ways.

WildStorm has a website, and this is one of those occasions on which I'll remind everyone that this column is not an official WildStorm Speaks column—these ideas are mine and nobody else's). There are also lots of fans with websites of their own, many using images scanned directly from WildStorm comics and cards. So we have posted an agreement (one of my jobs, besides overseeing our webmaster and everything else I do around here, is keeping track of our trademark and copyright activity and making sure that our rights are protected wherever possible) which we're asking people with fan sites to sign basically agreeing to do nothing more than obey the laws of the U.S.

But these people seem to think the Internet is the Wild West, with no laws a plug coming on—no, too soon to tell about that. It's all in the fine people who publish **FAN** had decided one day to put out a comic book magazine by scanning their favorite comics, without asking permission, attributing ownership of copyrights or trademarks, or otherwise following any of the intellectual property laws—and then printed 60 million copies of it and distributed it around the world. People with personal websites feel they're more like fanzines than professional publications, but they're reading themselves. If they don't think the same laws that apply to this magazine apply to them. And they're telling themselves if they don't think those laws are going to be enforced. Scan a Disney image of Mickey Mouse and put him on your website aiding or nude Pam Anderson, and see how long it is before Disney's lawyers are knocking at your door (and let me know your URL...).

What am I asking for? Not too much, I don't think—and at the same time, the same thing I've asked for in other columns: Have some consideration for other people and their feelings. Have some consideration for the law, and act responsibly within it. Don't set out to damage each other. Remember that anything you put out there has the potential to be seen by millions—if you were standing in front of those same millions, would you still write it or not, then don't. Simple, right?

Even though you might not have seen his name in American comics for a while, Paul Pope has been hard at work. The results will be out shortly, including an experimental project called ***Welcome to Mars: The Superwierd World****, and a giant size* ***THB*** *(the same size as* ***Buzz Buzz****), which he describes as containing "my best comics work. The stuff looks like Japanese comics, it's weird. People aren't going to be ready for this. It looks like it's my style, but it's so far from the tight four-tiered grids I was doing in* ***THB****, it doesn't even look the same." So get ready America, The Pope of Mars is back from Japan, and he's ready to rock!*

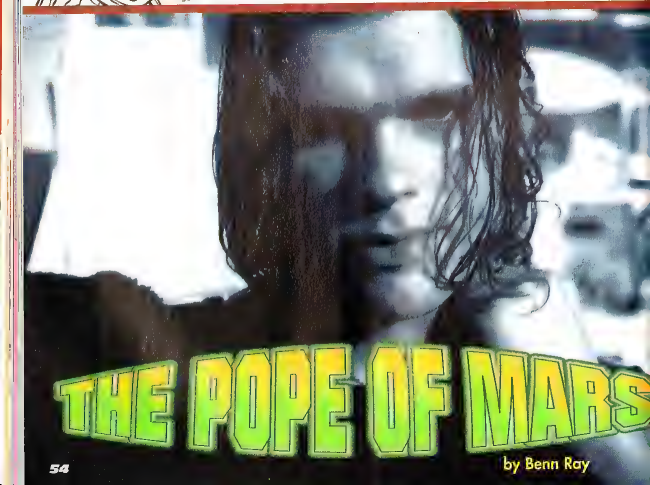


WANNA SEE?

After a warm reception for his graphic novel **The Ballad of Dr. Richardson**, Paul Pope sauntered onto the comics scene in 1994 with his self-published comic, **THB**. Immediately garnering critical praise and loyal fans, **THB** was the tale of H R Watson and her inflatable bodyguard, THB Pope set this tale on Mars, peppering it with Ray Bradbury influences and a distinct European art style that wowed everyone. After five issues (with #6 promised in early '97), Pope seemed to fade into the background of American comics, occasionally contributing a story to an anthology here or there, and producing a single issue of his artistic look at illustration, **Buzz Buzz**.

However, Pope has been busy selling millions of comics—in Japan. He first started with **Super Trouble** and may soon be moving into **Smoke Navigator** (from **Buzz Buzz**). He says the plan is that it will "run in a weekly morning edition magazine with the circulation at a million a week. It's going to run for 3 months and then collect as a book." According to Pope, "When they saw my 'dark stuff,' they [Japanese manga publishers] thought it would hit a core in Japan. And there's other weird stuff too; they think the kind of girls I draw are really popular in the States, that their look is popular in the States, but for some reason they don't think it's going to go over in Japan. They say it's something about the eyebrows—my **THB** girls look too mean. They think the way I make the girls look will be confusing to the people in Japan."

Doing manga hasn't left Pope's style unaffected. He admits, "Japanese comics have made me reconsider how to approach pacing in stories and representations of images on a page. So my panels have gotten bigger, and I've re-thought a lot of ways to show how things happen in the story, which is what manga is all about. It's not comics, it's manga. So the stuff is American manga." He describes the results as a sort of 3-part hybrid of American and European comics and manga, "My European roots



THE POPE OF MARS

by Benn Ray

fire there, like my Italian linework, but the pacing and representation is Japanese and the viewpoint is American. It's got that **THB** sassy girl thing."

But just how successful has his work in Japan been so far? Well, Pope says, "Somebody asked me 'How does it feel to be the ambassador of Japanese comics?' I don't think it's at that stage, but I'm doing what I can."

THE SUPERWEIRD WORLD

Pope is not only exploring avenues of American comic artists in Japan, he is also returning to **THB** with **Welcome to Mars: The Superweird World of THB**. The book is a 96-page, limited hardcover (and a paperback as well) based around a series postcards. Sound superweird? He explains, "About half the book is postcards, so it's a fat book. It's broken up into 3 sections of equal sizes. The first part is a history section. It's set up like a handbook for Martian teenagers that introduces Earth and Martian culture to young people." Ah, a handbook that introduces teenagers to culture. It's a shame we don't have one of those for American teens.

"That's the humor of it. It's written, not quite tongue-in-cheek, but with this academic style which seems to suggest the young people don't know much about their culture. So there's a sense of history, and you get to see a little bit about some things leading up to the **THB** world.

"However, the whole thing isn't a handbook. "The second section is a 24-page cartoon that has to do with one of the hotspots from **THB**. It's a cool slice of life. It's about 5 minutes long and you get a look at a Martian night club. It's a little avant-experimental, but it should be pretty neat." The night club is not exclusively of Martian origin, Pope admits, "It's based heavily on one of the coolest nightclubs I've ever been in, a place called Sarajevo in Montreal. I put myself in an awkward scenario in a cameo role which I really lived through. I tried to flip this girl $50 on a $3 drink. I must have lost my mind or something. I walked in and the girl caught my eye and I caught her eye. I did it just to be shocking, and it shocked her alright, but it wasn't cool. She said, 'I don't think so.' I felt bad, so later I caught her and said, 'I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be a jerk.' And she said 'That's alright, you just lost your mind for a minute.' We had a good laugh over that and then everything was cool. After that she gave me a smile again so.... In those kind of situations, that's about as much as you can expect from strangers. It was an interesting interaction. When I went home it really struck me as something you could do in a cartoon that would get across a sense of etiquette between strangers. So I worked that into the story.

And finally, "The third section is the post card images. Most of them refer back to the text. There's a couple of images from early Martian art representing what humans look like, and of course there are shots of **THB** characters. One of them is a snapshot of a picnic on Mars that looks like a black and white photograph."

Yet despite three distinct sections, Pope claims "the book is designed to be read. You read the text section and it leads directly into the comic book. The book ends with a look at Plutonium City night life, and the cartoon illustrates that point. There's a fake bibliography that refers the reader to different Martian text books they could get at the library, and then it goes right into the post card images. In the back, with the pagination, there's a brief description of the image. It gives a sense of cohesion. Each of the images are building upon some idea touched on in the text section." The book is so detail oriented that it even includes maps, as Pope explains, "There's a map of what's called the Middle Martian Continent which has all the major cities that are seen in **THB**. And there is a map of Plutonium City back when it was a small city. There's also a subway grid. I'm not really into the J.R.R. Tolkien world building thing, but I wanted to do something that got across the alien-ness of Mars. I wanted to get across this barrage of Old World Europe in an H.G. Wells science fiction future with Mars."

MOVING TO MARS?

And since we're on the verge of exploring the possibility of life on Mars, what does Pope think about the future of that planet? "Like Carl Sagan says, right now there's technology to go scoop out the center of an asteroid, build a city there and live off of the stuff from the asteroid because they say asteroids are mineral and nutrient rich. The technology exists, but the money's not there to implement things. I don't know if that should happen while there are still a lot of social problems on the planet. I'm a Libertarian, I'm not in favor of the government solving anybody's problems. I'd rather see Coca-Cola build spaceships, they'd do a better job. At this stage, I'm just gathering information. There is something I'm consciously trying to do with all this Martian stuff, and that's get across a very positive sense of where humans can go in the future. I'm assuming that people are going to be able to get into space, that people are not going to blow each other up."

Until we colonize Mars, Pope promises to "continue to work hard to make good comics to reach an international audience because comics/manga is an international graphic language Dark Horse is taking some of my work to Europe this year. The **Ripoff** is going over. I've got stuff in the states and stuff in Japan, so I'm really trying hard to create world-class comics for a world-class audience."

MAKING CRIME PAY

It didn't start with ***Sin City****. Or* ***Stray Bullets****. Almost since Edgar Allan Poe's "Murder in the Rue Morgue" first brought to life the detective story genre, crime fiction has played an important part in American comics. From DC's* ***Detective Comics*** *(Batman didn't show up until #27!) in the early days of the Golden Age, to* ***Crime SuspenStories*** *and* ***Shock SuspenStories*** *in the halcyon days of EC's greatness, to* ***Nathaniel Dusk, P.I.*** *and* ***Maze Agency*** *in the 1980s, crime comics have played a small but vital part in the amazing world of comics.*

by
J.C. Vaughn

Crime comics are back with a vengeance. From the grit of Frank Miller's Sin City, to the careening fatalism of David Lapham's Stray Bullets, to Acclaim Comics' new Crime Fiction imprint, there is a small but significant resurgence in American crime comics. With books like Jinx and the reprints of Crime SuspenStories, there is probably more diversity of product than there has ever been. If we stretch the traditional definition of crime comics just a little to include world-noir titles such as the TV-based The X-Files, the recent resurgence of the genre suggests we might be in another shining period for the medium. Are we? You decide.

Here's a look at some of the crime comics on the market today, and a few of the classics:

CRIME SUSPENSTORIES SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES

EC/Gemstone Publishing
Writers: Various
Artists: Various

Among the greatest crime comics ever published, surely **Crime** and **Shock** are the ones that established the image of the genre in the minds of many. With often gruesome covers—some that could attract the wrong kind of attention even today—these anthologies presented an incredible variety of talent. Contributors included Johnny Craig, Al Williamson, Al Feldstein and Ray Bradbury. Excuse the plug here, but the modestly priced Gemstone reprints are an excellent way to pick up what are some otherwise expensive issues.

DETECTIVES, INC.

Eclipse
Writer: Don McGregor
Artist: Marshall Rogers, Gene Colan

First published as a graphic novel in 1980, **Detectives, Inc.** is another example of how Don McGregor just can't leave well enough alone, and how he usually ends up with a great story as a result. Where **Dusk** was firmly rooted in its era, **Detectives, Inc.** is a blunt, up front slice of contemporary life, with a heavy dose of social issues. Instead of coming off like a lecture on what's good and what's bad, McGregor lets his characters confront the issue rather than confronting them himself. **Detectives, Inc.** may be returning soon. Watch for it.

ARMED & DANGEROUS

Acclaim Comics
Writer/Artist: Bob Hall

At first many dismissed this title as "Stray City," a **Sin City-Stray Bullets** wannabe. "Many" were wrong. With a unique voice and viewpoint, **Armed & Dangerous** possesses a character, story and yes, style all its own. In an industry rife with copy cats, it's easy to see how some jumped to conclusions about this book, but it's impossible to see how one could retain such notions after reading it. **A&D** tells its story from the gutter up. The denizens of this particular world are unsavory, but there is something very intriguing about them.

THE GRACKLE

Acclaim Comics
Writer: Mike Baron
Artists: Paul Gulacy & Charles Yookum

Mike Baron has turned out some amazing work over the years, but how much of it has lived up to his incredible work with Steve Rude on **Nexus**? Paul Gulacy, too, has turned out some amazing work, but how much of it has lived up to his performance with Doug Moench on **Master of**

Kung-Fu? **The Grackle** is a seminal project for each of these distinguished gentlemen because it marks the most gripping, stunning, adventurous work either of them has achieved away from their noted partners. **The Grackle** goes for the accelerator and never lets up.

GRAVEDIGGERS

Acclaim Comics
Writer: Mark Moretti
Artists: Mark Moretti & Rodney Ramos

The Unsolved Crimes unit of the New York City Police Department has got to be the richest environment for crime drama in the United States, and it makes a great place to start a crime comic story. Perhaps the most readily successful of Acclaim's three entries, Gravediggers (at least the first series) is the story of the detectives who must solve the case a French attaché supposedly murdered 20 years ago who recently turned up freshly dead.

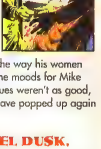
JINX

Caliber Comics
Writer/Artist: Brian Michael Bendis

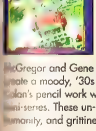
Born as **AKA Goldfish**, **Jinx** is the story of a grifter named Goldfish, his partner Columbia, and a female bond officer named Jinx. Creator Brian Michael Bendis has described the ongoing work as "*The Good, The Bad and The Ugly* meets *Annie Hall* on the streets of a fictional Cleveland." Aside from the astounding implication that there is a real Cleveland, that's a pretty darn accurate summation of this unique blend of style, action and attitude.

MAZE AGENCY

Comico/Innovation
Writer: Mike W. Barr
Artist: Adam Hughes & others



Perhaps most noted for featuring the stunning early work of Adam Hughes, **Maze Agency** involved the loses of Jennifer Mays and Gabriel White Hughes, of course, is noted for the way his women look, he did a superb job of creating the moods for Mike Barr's excellent stories. Post-Hughes issues weren't as good, but rumors of a **Maze Agency** return have popped up again recently.



NATHANIEL DUSK, PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

DC Comics
Writer: Don McGregor
Artist: Gene Colan

In the current onslaught (sorry Marvel) of crime comics, sometimes it's easy to forget the crime comics that have come before. You'll never forget this one, though. Don (**Lady Rawhide**) McGregor and Gene (**Tomb of Dracula**) Colan combined to create a moody, '30s detective drama which presented Colan's pencil work without inks in two amazing four-issue mini-series. These un-inked pages captured the spirit, humanity, and grittiness of Nathaniel Dusk as he tried to earn a living in Depression-era New York. McGregor's research (down to the weather on the dates in question) and his ability to create well-rounded characters was dead on here.

NOWHERESVILLE

Caliber Comics
Writer/Artist: Mark Ricketts

"**Nowheresville** is a crime cocktail with a beatnik twist set in a dimly lit corner of a '50s metropolis teeming with a subculture of poets, hipsters, hash slingers, flipsters, gangsters, floozies, deadbeats, greasers, junkie Bebop musicians, grill rats, hot-rodders, B-movie babes, and wigged-out artists," says Mark Ricketts' press material for **Nowheresville**. [That may be the most precise description any author has ever given out, but it takes the fun out of writing about the book, Mark!] If you've ever grooved to the Beat Generation, you owe it to yourself to check this book out. It is truly a superb mix of dialogue, story and art. Dig it, man.

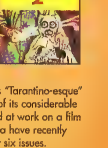
SIN CITY

Dark Horse
Writer/Artist: Frank Miller

Sin City didn't start out to be the rebirth of crime comics in America. It just started out as what Frank Miller thought was going to be a 48-page graphic novel. 200 odd pages later, it was **Sin City**. It was also an instant classic. Since debuting in the pages of **Dark Horse Presents**, Miller's hard hitting, black and white stories of the gray world that is Sin City have been collected into hardcovers and trade paperbacks, and they've forced the mystery-and-crime-reading public to re-examine their notions of comic books. Look for more **Sin City** stories in the near future.

STRAY BULLETS

El Capitán
Writer/Artist: David Lapham



It's a brutal world, one filled with twists, turns, and the unexpected. Nothing in David Lapham's previous work (**Shadowman**, **Warriors of Plasm**) suggested that he was going to spring **Stray Bullets** on an unsuspecting public, but he did it anyway. His stark view of this particular harsh reality has been described as "Tarantino-esque" for the suddenness and matter-of-fact nature of its considerable violence (not surprisingly, Lapham's been hard at work on a film project). Lapham and his publisher/wife Maria have recently released a large, hardcover collecting the first six issues. **Stray Bullets** continues as an ongoing title.

X-FILES

Topps
Various creators

Chris Carter's **X-Files** doesn't fit the traditional mold of a crime comic, but then again it's not that far of a stretch of the imagination either. FBI Agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully seek the answers to bizarre occurrences and crimes, just the way they do every week on the television series. The mystery and intrigue of the series survives well in this format. While the regular series presents original stories, **X-Files Season One** will present adaptations of series episodes.

THE CRIME SPREE!!!

It's a multi-state crime spree, and the loot is incredible! One extremely lucky winner will receive all of the amazing prizes in this contest. The unlucky runners up will receive **NOTHING**, not even a long kiss good-bye.

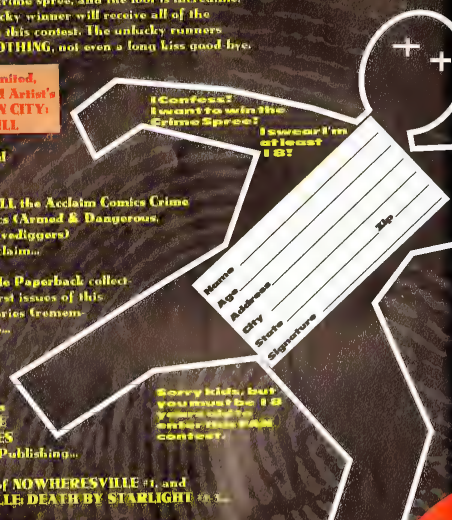
One extremely limited, signed, numbered Artist's Proof copy of SIN CITY: THE BIG FAT KILL courtesy of Dark Horse Comics and Frank Miller...

One full set of ALL the Acclaim Comics Crime Fiction line comics (Armed & Dangerous, The Grackle, Gravediggers) to date from Acclaim...

One X-Files Trade Paperback collecting the hot six first issues of this popular Topps series (remember: trust no one...

One full set of SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES and all the issues to date of CRIME SUSPENSTORIES from Gemstone Publishing...

One signed set of NOWHERESVILLE #1, and NOWHERESVILLE: DEATH BY STARLIGHT #1...



Just send your entry (including your name, address, age, and phone number) to Gemstone Publishing, Inc., Making Crime Pay Contest, 1966 Greenspring Drive, Suite 405, Timonium, MD. 21093.

No purchase necessary. Submissions become the property of Gemstone Publishing, Inc. and cannot be returned. Entries must be received by March 1, 1997 which is the closing date of the contest. Winners will be selected no later than March 15, 1997. Contest winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received by Gemstone Publishing, Inc. by the closing date of the contest. Void where prohibited. Nonprofit rules apply. All taxes, duties, and state fees are the responsibility of prize winner.

GEMSTONE PUBLISHING TOPPS DARK HORSE COMICS CRIME FICTION

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SIGN OF THE TIMES:

*Comic book readers have become jaded by the over-hyped, under-written, poorly-drawn comics that have proliferated in today's market. As a result, independent publishers have drawn attention and acclaim for providing fans with dynamically-drawn and intelligently written material. But will there be room for one more? William Christensen (editor-in-chief of Avatar Comics) has read the signs, and he thinks so. This fall, Avatar Press debuted a new line of titles that promise to deliver high quality story-telling, top-notch production, and timely delivery, all of which are rare in comics of the '90s. **FAN** talked with Christensen about the dawning of the Avatar Age...*

by
Arnold T. Blumberg

AVATAR COMICS ARRIVES

FAN: WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO START AVATAR?

William Christensen: We felt there was an opening right now, especially with the market at such a low point, for a new publisher to come in and really connect with the fans. There are still a lot of fans out there, but they're not finding what they're looking for, and we want to put out a nice, diversified line of product to satisfy them

WHAT WILL DISTINGUISH AVATAR FROM THE COMPETITION?

Our books are going to be really good [laughs]. That's what everybody says, but I'm very pleased with the creative team we've put together. Our artists are turning in slam-bang work. They're excited about the projects they're doing for us, so they're turning in the best work they've ever done. Hopefully, we'll also have some fresh ideas and approaches that should get fans excited.

SOUNDS LIKE A PLAN. WHAT TITLES WILL LAUNCH THE AVATAR LINE?

We have six series planned so far. In December we introduced three—**Pandora**, **Silent Rapture**, and **Donna Mia**. **Pandora**, written by myself and Mark Seifert, and drawn by Richard Pollard, falls into our big niche in that we're concerned with creating a modern mythology. We're bringing the gods kicking and screaming into the modern world. We want to ask, who are the gods and the demons of the 1990s? What are the consequences of their existence? This will also allow us to do titles that aren't directly related to the mythology. **Pandora**, **The Furies**, and **Twilight** are our first three mythology books, but then we have **Lookers**, which is definitely not a myth-type comic. It focuses

or two women who run a detective agency, and it's much more irreverent.

WILL ALL THESE TITLES EXIST WITHIN THE SAME UNIVERSE?

Except for two of the creator-owned books, yes. **Silent Rapture** by Jude Millien is our pure adrenaline, martial arts meets sword-and-sorcery book. That will not tie in with the Avatar-verse. Neither will **Donna Mia**, who's a bad girl unlike any other. She's a demoness who's trying to find her way in the modern world, which we see from her unique perspective. It's a sexy yet smart series, and it offers something a little meatier than the standard fare.

HOW WILL THE AVATAR-VERSE BOOKS BE STRUCTURED?

Initially everything will be a mini-series while we figure out which books readers like or don't like. And fans would be disappointed if we did a twelve issue maxi-series, it performs poorly, and they never see the end of the story. Most of the Avatar-verse titles won't deal as directly with the gods and demons as **Pandora**, but rather with how they affect the rest of the world. You can imagine the sheer higgledy-piggledy it causes when suddenly there's a six foot demon in Times Square.

IT'S GOING TO JAM UP TRAFFIC.

Exactly, and how's it going to affect Wall Street? People are going to dig that, and the familiarity people have with mythology will allow readers to associate with Avatar very quickly. It breaks down a lot of barriers. When "Character X" comes out, nobody knows anything about him, but with **Pandora**, you already know the basic story. She will be our anchor in the beginning.

WON'T THAT READERS GET CHARACTERS LIKE PANDORA AS MORE OF THE SAME?

You're right, and on the surface there certainly are similarities. We're counting on that to get people to read it and see how it differs. We're convinced that people will be hooked. There's no doubt that it's an uphill battle, but we're aware of that, and we're not foolishly doing the whole Tekno "let's spend a hundred grand a month on advertising" plan. We're going to build this universe, and a lot of fans will come along for the ride.

IS THERE THE THINK-ING BEHIND TO BE AWARDED VARIANT EDITIONS AVAILABLE?

We've had a stunningly strong fan response in favor of doing variant editions. We wouldn't be doing them if we didn't think there was a significant demand for it, and having the variant editions will hopefully bring in a little additional revenue. So we're hedging our bets as well, making sure we can continue putting everything out even if the initial response isn't terribly strong.

ANY BIG EVENTS OR STORYLINES PLANNED FOR 1997?

We're going to have a big crossover in the spring involving several other companies. I want to stretch the boundaries of what I'm doing with my characters and Avatar, and we want to play in someone else's sandbox as well. It's fun, so we're planning one in April and maybe one at the end of the year. We want to bring something else to the party that fans haven't seen before. It's going to be tough because 1997 is the Year of the Crossovers, but I like working with other creators' characters, and other creators seem to be having a blast working with Avatar.

IS THERE AN OVER-ALL GAME PLAN FOR THE FUTURE OF AVATAR?

We plan to use the direct market as a base and grow into different media merchandise. We're techno-junkies here, so we really stay plugged in to whatever's coming down the pike, whether it's in film, TV, even the so-called "information superhighway." We've already negotiated a license for trading cards and toys, and we're in negotiations with some film and TV projects. We really are hitting the ground running. Since I've been in the industry for a long time, my contacts have made it real easy to set up a whole infrastructure, the full meal deal. We're going to have a lot of the fun stuff that usually takes companies a long time to get into, and we'll have it early in the game. It's good for us and the retailers too.

DO YOU SEE THIS AS YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE HEALTH OF THE COMIC BOOK INDUSTRY AS A WHOLE?

Absolutely. With any of the mass media merchandise we've got, we're adamant about making sure that the source is very apparent. People will see this comes from Avatar comic books, and this way we can try to bring fans back to the industry, because that's good for all of us. We're not just doing comic books to get into these other avenues, we want to use these other avenues so we can keep doing comic books.

WE WISH YOU LUCK AND LOOK FORWARD TO EVERYTHING AVATAR HAS TO OFFER.

We're just giddy as schoolboys over here. 1997 is going to be an incredibly exciting year for us.

America's superheroes circle the globe in a never-ending quest for converts . and American comics (comicus americanus) are making inroads overseas like never before. Quicker than you can shout "Cultural imperialism!" there's ***Star Wars***, ***Ghost***, ***Araknis***, and ***Aliens*** *everywhere you look. And don't even get us started about* ***Spawn***. *What is it with that guy?*

Getting Lost in the Translation

A Quick Sampler

By J.C. Vaughn

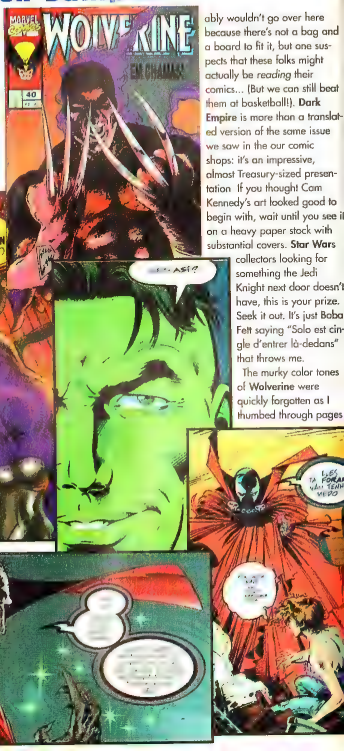
For years, American comic fans who traveled abroad were treated to crappy (that's poor quality, boys and girls) reprints of their favorite comics, and little more. That, world travelers be thankful, may be behind us now.

It's not that you can't still find some pretty bad stuff out there—you can, but as long as we're exporting those tourists with bad shirts, plaid shorts, and black socks, we don't have a whole lot of room to point fingers.

On the other hand, let's point. Among the international comic cuisine I sampled was a truly bad, digest-sized, Brazilian reprint of **Wolverine**. The coloring looked like it came out some homicidal photocopier, but it was the first **Wolverine** book I'd seen with a **Batman** ad in it, so I suppose that's something. (There is no Marvel vs. DC in Rio, folks.) The poor quality of **Wolverine** left me expecting the worst. Instead, it seems that format and production values in Europe and Japan match and often outpace those in the U.S.A.

Star Wars: Dark Empire #4 from Dark Horse France, for example, is one of the most stunning single comic books I've ever seen. It's practically a coffee table book, and it's just a single issue. It probably wouldn't go over here because there's not a bag and a board to fit it, but one suspects that these folks might actually be *reading* their comics... (But we can still beat them at basketball!). **Dark Empire** is more than a translated version of the same issue we saw in the our comic shops: it's an impressive, almost Treasury-sized presentation. If you thought Cam Kennedy's art looked good to begin with, wait until you see it on a heavy paper stock with substantial covers. **Star Wars** collectors looking for something the Jedi Knight next door doesn't have, this is your prize. Seek it out. It's just Boba Fett saying "Solo est cingle d'entrer là-dedans" that throws me.

The murky color tones of **Wolverine** were quickly forgotten as I thumbed through pages



of German, Japanese, Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese, French and Finnish comics. (At the **FAN** offices, we slipped the Chinese version of **Hellboy: Seed of Destruction** into editor Mike Renegar's reading pile, and he was halfway through the book before he realized he didn't understand a word of it.)

Spawn seems to be living the life of luxury everywhere. Not only does Todd McFarlane's creation continue to burn up the U.S. charts month after month, but he's got quality reprints overseas. Proving that all Brazilian comics aren't bad, **Spawn** #1 has the look and feel of the original. The third Japanese volume of **Spawn** has an amazing, manga-like cover (in production values, not style) reprinting **Spawn** #7-9, and it includes biographies of McFarlane and Neil Gaiman (the version from Finland also reprinted several issues, and the little cultural imperialist in me thought it was pretty funny to imagine Spawn's angst with a Scandinavian accent. It, too, had Marvel ads, something one doesn't expect to see in a McFarlane book over here.

The lands of translations are not relegated to comics that have been around for years, either. **Bone** is well-known in many countries and has won many awards. And Mushroom's Araknis has made the leap into international publishing with its Portuguese language edition for Brazil, so even independents no longer stop at the border. Furthermore, other Dark Horse translations like **Ghost**, **Hellboy**, **Sin City**, and Time Cop seem to be presented in quality formats on par with their American counterparts

Special thanks to ***Lou Bank*** *at Dark Horse,* ***Julia Simmons*** *at Todd McFarlane Productions, and* ***Mario Oritz*** *at Mushroom for getting us the foreign editions of their comics*

POOLING TALENT

FAN DIVES INTO CLAYPOOL, SEARCHING FOR HIDDEN TREASURE

*Claypool Comics' Richard Howell is not your average comic book editor. This is a man who clearly loves what he publishes, and although Claypool may not be the most recognizable imprint in the market today, with their small stable of titles— **Elvira, Phantom of Fear City, Soulsearchers and Company,** and **Deadbeats**—they offer some of the most original and entertaining horror/humor books on the stands. What's more, they consistently feature some of the hottest writers and artists in the business who contribute their time and effort not for the profit or acclaim, but because they love what they're doing too. **FAN** decided to find out what makes Claypool so special, and why many readers should be visiting a place called Fear City...*

by
Arnold T. Blumberg

DAWN OF THE UNDEAD

"In 1992, my friend Ed Vela was disheartened as a comics fan," Richard Howell, editor-in-chief at Claypool Comics, explains. "It looked like the culture's level was dropping sharply." As part of a generation that wasn't being served by the comics on the stands, the two decided to remedy the situation. "At the time, I was working as a freelance packager for Harris Comics," Howell says. "[so] we used it as the only way to get comics he likes to read. [...] I [...] bankroll it."

Initially, Claypool Comics was to launch with a licensed title whose identity is shrouded in mystery. "It was the original plan that got the company going; and when it didn't pan out, we had nothing to publish." Salvation came in the form of a slinky, black-tressed vamp with a built-in cult following. "The Elvira people were disappointed by their previous comics experience, so they needed to be

COMICS FOR PEOPLE WHO LOVE TO *MAKE* COMICS

...Howell is quick to explain just what drives so many hot artists and writers to the Claypool line. "If somebody wanted to work for us because he can get an answer or get rich, he is the wrong person. The people here do it because they genuinely love comics, and like to be in an atmosphere where good work is rewarded. Some of our creators return call from the editor ... before the phone even rings. Creator relations often run both ways. That 'Wacky Packages' guy was a lawyer. He said that he loves Elvira or whatever, but it's not enough for something like that to pay the rent for a family. He's a talented kid, and had so much fun he wants to do more."

Because it's just one of many titles and a minor one at that, the little company that could. The line-up includes some top-notch talent. Howell worked with Claypool includes Kurt Busiek, Steve Rude, and Paul Dini, who did his first professional comic work on Elvira. Boasting all this high caliber talent is a key factor in getting Claypool through some very rough industry waters. It's also a facility he takes very seriously. "I like to maintain some of the story control. I don't want to cross the bridge of 'somebody' writing Elvira and it's not me coming up with black and white books for $2.50, people have to be satisfied."

THE FUTURE OF FEAR CITY

In the early three titles, you might think Claypool will expand its line in 1997, but Howell intends to stay the course. "It's a question of catching up on deadlines we already have. One of the things we've learned is that as a small-et company, you're not high up on the priority list of some of your contributors. Some months, trying to get Peter David on the phone...well, he's a busy guy," he laughs.

"Basically we're fighting to keep the industry alive by making comics people are going to want to find," Howell concludes. "We have a dedicated readership, and we fulfill a legitimate market need—books for grown-up people. Our motto, 'Games for People Who Love to Read Comics,' is a good one, although our press releases also say, 'Claypool—the publisher of hidden treasures.'" Howell notes with a chuckle. With the stable of talent that Howell and Vice have built, Claypool Comics is a treasure that may not remain hidden for too much longer. F

...ed." We told them we wanted to do a comic about ...ventures. Unlike one of the efforts, it would have Elvira ...alike the other one, it would be funny," Howell laughs. ...the former Coors Queen of Halloween control her ..." Elvira and her people have as much creative ...y want. They approve the plots and the finished art- ...re pretty happy with the book, certainly Elvira herself ...very well in it. They never thought we'd keep coming ...my plots for fairly issues, but there's no sign of us get- ...ore sane."

...OP: FEAR CITY

...the debut of **Elvira**, Claypool turned its attention to ...a small but extensive stable of titles under an umbrella ...Fear City," would be the home for the Claypool line, ...me supporting cast appearing in every series. "I ...would be both tricky and fun," says Howell. "We could ...books together without one of those aggressive and ...crossover events. We also added little touches like the ...count on the covers. Did you notice that it's going ...offers. "We can't rope Elvira into too many ...though," Howell notes, "but we finally did bite the ...on **Elvira/Soulsearchers** back as serial."

...hers and Company, following the adventures of a ...paranormal investigators, is perhaps Claypool's most ...ible series, thanks to its well known writer. "Peter David ...ed to work together for quite a while," Howell says. "**...Soulsearchers** was a different group of characters ...another publisher, and as Peter says, 'we tossed that ...tossed it right back.' When Fear City was being ...said 'why don't we do the Soulsearchers?' Then ...onner became available to spend time and she really ...ver with **Soulsearchers**. The work had a lot of ...humor, and fans of personality as it. It's still going ...strong."

...e debut of **Soulsearchers**, another Claypool title start- ...ave run—**The Phantom of Fear City**. It was not ...be a limited series however. "**Deadbeats** was. But, ...en, we had a lot of trouble managing onto artists we ...an. If a series like this is going to catch on, it's going ...e consistence and it just didn't come together. ...Howell continues with regard to "Steve Ferguson still has ideas for ...characters," Howell adds, implying that there may ...be a ... as **Phantom** in the future. For now, the tale of one ...lot eternal love remains Claypool's only completed ...story.

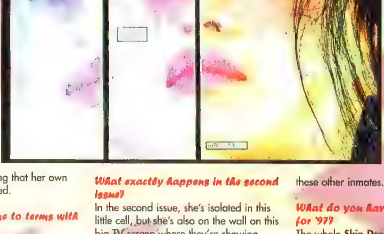
...final series to date is the supernatural soap opera, **Deadbeats**, following an ensemble cast in a town populated by ...vampires. Howell believes that despite the many familiar ele- ...ments, **Deadbeats** offers something different from the usual vam- ...pire fare. "What sets **Deadbeats** apart is that it's not as much ...about letting as it is about relationships and character. It's ...always been my theory that if horror is going to be effective on a ...macro level, then the readers have to care about the charac- ...ters when they're being menaced." The parallels between the series ...and popular vampire soap opera are not coincidental. "Both ...are life-long fans of *Dark Shadows*, so that's defi- ...nitely a source of inspiration." Howell is excited to add that the ...**Deadbeats** paperback, coming out soon, features a fore- ...word by *Dark Shadows* actress Catherine Lee Scott.

David Mack's **Kabuki** *has consistently been a fan-favorite from day one. As the story has continued, his book has grown steadily, picking up more and more readers, through* **Kabuki: Circle of Blood** *to* **Masks of the Noh** *to the new* **Kabuki: Skin Deep**. *It's to the point now where he's working with creators like Alex Ross and Terry Moore, and fans are buying up* **Kabuki** *faster than most retailers can keep it on the shelves. All of this led* **FAN** *to offer the exclusive* **Kabuki Fan Edition #1**, *available in this very issue, and to David to tell us the secrets behind* **Kabuki**.

by
Christopher Woodward

How much can you tell me about the new Kabuki book, Skin Deep?

David Mack: What has happened is that Control Corps, the people who regulate all the other agencies, picked up Kabuki before her agency, the Noh, and they place her in this facility for defective agents. If there's an agent that is defective in some way or has a major accident or memory loss or some other problem, they put them here and they try to re-educate them and try to reprogram them and a psychoanalysis takes place. So we discover what's really much of Kabuki because there's a certain doctor she likes to talk to everyday and tell things to, but at the same time, the agency is trying to pump her for information. She comes to terms in this series with her own appearance, which she seems to have some psychological problem with and has a deeper attraction to her mask than many of the other agents would. She seems to view her mask as her true face, being that her own countenance is marred.



In your story, to come to terms with that.

Yes, very much so. This book is very much about individual identity in terms of Kabuki herself. **Circle of Blood**, through the title and everything that was in it, was very much about family and about country, which is why I made a metaphor for the flag being a circle of blood and also the bloodlines of Kabuki and how violent and tragic much of her story was. I always try to impose a title that sums up what I'm going for and has several different meanings, and **Skin Deep** completely shows that. This book is very much focused on Kabuki and who she is and furthers along her journey of self-discovery.

How much is Alex Ross involved with each issue?

For the second issue of **Kabuki: Skin Deep** there will be an Alex Ross cover, which I penciled and he painted. His painted cover and the cover I did are connected in a way that I've never seen done before. It makes a lot of sense because this book has a very psychological storyline. And it's almost like a schizophrenic cover because there's a physical image that Alex and I are working on with Kabuki and there's a more psychological image that I'm doing for the other side. And one of the connecting themes with the two covers is that the tattoo is split over both covers and one half is the actual dragon tattoo and the other is the bones of the dragon tattoo.

What exactly happens in the second issue?

In the second issue, she's isolated in this little cell, but she's also on the wall on this big TV screen where they're showing reruns of her as Kabuki, so it further shows the dichotomy of the two people, how the media controlled everything, and how people in the media are made to seem a certain way, and even things so personal as to how she really appreciated the costume and how it was built and how it made her appear in terms of physical attraction. In this whole series, the costume is only seen on the TV, she's never actually wearing it. And she probably will never wear it again, actually, so she's completely in civilian clothes throughout this whole story, but it's fascinating to see the difference between this real person and this TV persona and how the media gives people the impression of reality and the impression of distorting their bodies to fit the lowest common denominator of attraction.

Is Kabuki going to be more verbal in this series? Will we finally get more of an idea of what she's about?

Exactly. She keeps her sanity in this prison of the absurd because she has a secret communication with one of the other inmates who she's never seen but corresponds with through notes dropped through a vent. They are keeping each other alive by their communication. At the time, they're not in very good standing with how things are run in the prison because they're not cooperating with everybody. There are rations and everything, where everyday they get two pieces of toilet paper and they use them to write on. And the other character drops these messages through a vent folded into origami creatures, and it really corresponds to how she thinks and views the world in terms of how she's crossing some kind of divide three-dimensionally and two-dimensionally. This character will actually prove to be a long-running character in the future. The thing is, you learn a lot about Kabuki not because she's there talking to herself, but in how she relates to all these other inmates.

What do you have planned for '97?

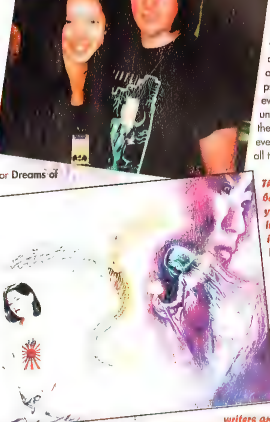
The whole **Skin Deep** storyline is book-ended by the **Masks of the Noh** series. The Siamese, two of the characters from that series, locate Kabuki and something tragic seems to happen, and then you flashback to nine months earlier and the whole series works its way for nine months up to what has happened, and you realize all these clues from throughout the whole series work towards a final picture that comes together at the end. And, as you probably saw a little bit back, Terry Moore did a **Strangers in Paradise/Kabuki** illustration in **Act III**, and then I did a painted card for him after that. But there's even more of a surprise with Terry in 1997, a really cool surprise.

What do you have planned for the Kabuki FAN Edition?

I'm really enjoying that. I'm using it as a link to every series that I've done. I'm starting it in the **Skin Deep** setting where she's in the cell and keeping to herself

and, in retrospect, she thinks about much of what has happened in her past and the main story of **Circle of Blood**. But it will also relate to the **Skin Deep** stuff. And it will be all new stuff. I really love doing introspective types of stories, and that's what this will be.

People who have read a lot of **Kabuki** will really love it, but people who may not have seen much of **Kabuki** or the first series will get a very good idea of what it's about right there. Plus the fact that it's in full-color, it's essentially much more natural for me and even much faster for me to do paintings than it is to do black and white.



That surprises me. Most of the people I talk to tell me painting takes much longer than penciling something and inking it and leaving it in black and white.

It surprises a lot of people. I guess it's different in odd ways. For **Dreams of the Dead**, for instance, it loaned itself so well to color, to try and do anything like that in black and white would have been silly. And that's the most natural way to work, with no boundaries at all: just being able to use whatever I want to. I could draw something in red ink, and that's a color piece and I can just put layers of other colors on top of it. Black and white has amazing strong points and it's appropriate to other things, but especially for a long, drawn out story, where you're depicting action, black and white is better for sure, as you're able to show motion and specific details, and color might get in the way. That's why I use color for the more psychological stuff. It adds more mood and makes it more cerebral. Ultimately, the storyline indicates the medium. For instance, the black and white fades into the color dream state in **Dreams of the Dead**.

Dreams of the Dead, speaking of your color work, was just beautiful. I reviewed it for the magazine a few months back.

Yes, I remember that. Thanks. I was really happy to read what you said about it too, that everytime you looked back at it, you saw new things in it.

It's an excellent book. I'd love to see you do something like a graphic novel, where it's a longer fully-painted project.

I really appreciate that. Doing it within a storyline really gives me the full range of showing what can be done with comics as a medium and as a pointer in terms of telling the story. It's not just coloring for coloring's sake. There are pages where the reality of the situation is in black and white. Of course, I put so much into every panel and how every page fits together with the panel layout and every one relates to the other. And every book from a bigger perspective has such meaning for me, but I'm not sure that everybody necessarily sees all the stuff that I'm doing. But they don't have to. The more they see it, the more they'll appreciate it. All the care and all the extra thought processes that I put into every panel, that affects them unconsciously, as it gives them the feel of what I'm doing, even though they might not see all the things that I've done

That's just it, you can go back and look at a lot of your work and you'd see it's a lot more dense than it might appear at first.

I agree, there's something for you every time you read it, it's not just a fluff piece that you throw away after you're done. I'm doing the book that I would like to read myself, something that I would buy myself, even if I wasn't doing it.

That's the approach that a lot of the best writers and artist are using. I know that's what Mark Waid has said he's doing—he's writing stories that he wants to see happen as a fan.

I agree, it's great to hear that. When you put that much into it and you do what you as a consumer would want, putting all the extra things into it and the layers, people really respond to that, and you see an amazing growth with that. And frankly, it's been great. Since the last time you and I spoke, I've put out so many things, I know there's demand for it, I know people want it, and I'm trying to stay bimonthly because then I can do a perfect book and make it just right. And in the amount of time since March when we talked, I've put out the **Circle of Blood** trade, all three issues of the **Masks of the Noh** series, which was an amazing success, plus the **Dreams of the Dead** story, plus **Kabuki: Skin Deep Act 1**. By the time this comes out, **Skin Deep Act 2** will be ready to go as well. And in that short amount of time, I've gotten an amazing amount of new readers, an amazing amount of mail, it's just been fantastic. Every single book I do is done with such great care that every one seems to bring new people into the book and new people into comics. It's not an up and down pattern with the book, it's been a steady growth.

This is no ordinary comic book... This is KABUKI FAN Edition #1.

This is a fully painted story by David Mack that's sure to be as beautiful as his previous color work. And with Kabuki finally beginning to get the recognition it deserves, this is one you're going to have to believe. Kabuki FAN Edition #1 is the only place you can get this amazing story, bridging the gap between David Mack's thrilling Kabuki: Masks of the Noh and his new series, Kabuki: Skin Deep. Don't miss out on this one-time offer. There's no doubt this will be a book you won't want to miss out on.

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CALIBER COMICS

ARCHETYPE PRODUCTIONS

Above each of the desks of Jonah and Michael Cogley there hangs a sign. It says, 'People who say it cannot be done should not interrupt those who are doing it.' Walking into comics during one of the industry's lowest points is an intimidating task. But, the Cogley brothers believe they are up to it.

The journey that leads to Archetype Productions really begins back in the mid-seventies. Specifically, when Jonah and Michael were first introduced to reading comics. It's interesting that comic books which were earned as a reward for being well behaved during visits to the local grocery store would end up being their inspiration. During this period they read many issues of the **Avengers**, **Fantastic Four**, **The Hulk**, **Superman** and **Batman**. Not collected, read. Each issue was read and re-read to the point of the comic falling apart. Both try to avoid thinking about the value of the comics they "wore out" as kids.

Fast forward to 1995. Jonah, a graphic designer, and Michael, a salesman in the medical field, were frustrated with the continuing prominence of the anti-hero. "We wanted to see heroes with positive attitudes who are not bitter about sacrificing for the common good. So, we created Omega Force," said Michael, the writer. Thus, Archetype Productions was born.

During the hours after their day jobs, the two developed and refined characters that Michael had been writing about since the eighth grade. Having evolved over so many years, the storyline needed very little tweaking, but the characters had to be built from the ground up visually. That's where Jonah's talent and vision paid off.

"I had three main goals," says Jonah. "First and foremost, I wanted to make the characters look cool. Second, I knew I had to make it more fun and less confusing for the readers, so each character had to have a unique appearance. Finally, I wanted each character's look to make sense considering his or her background and origin."

After all of that work, a real obstacle remained. Time. There are a lot of details that go into publishing a comic book. Jonah and Michael did not have the time, or the experience, to handle all of those responsibilities. That is when Entity comics stepped in. Don Chin, the publisher of Entity Comics, has run a successful independent comic company for years. His knowledge and experience on all areas of the comics industry such as printing, marketing, and retailer relations has proven invaluable. Publishing under the Entity banner has allowed Jonah and Michael to focus on making **Omega Force** the best comic it can be, while retaining all rights to the characters and being in control of their destinies.

"We owe a lot to Don Chin," admits Michael. "He's the one who really got behind us and gave us the support necessary to publish our comic. Without him there would be no Archetype Productions."

The future is bright for Archetype Productions. The first issue of their three issue **Omega Force Dark Secret** mini-series sets the stage for an action packed adventure. The second issue will begin stories in January, with the mini-series concluding in March. The main antagonist is an incredibly powerful entity known as Karad, the Soul Saver. In the third issue, he will show us why he is feared throughout the galaxy. "Jonah warns. "So top it off, we have a beautiful painted cover by experienced illustrator, and comics newcomer, Don Lohmann."

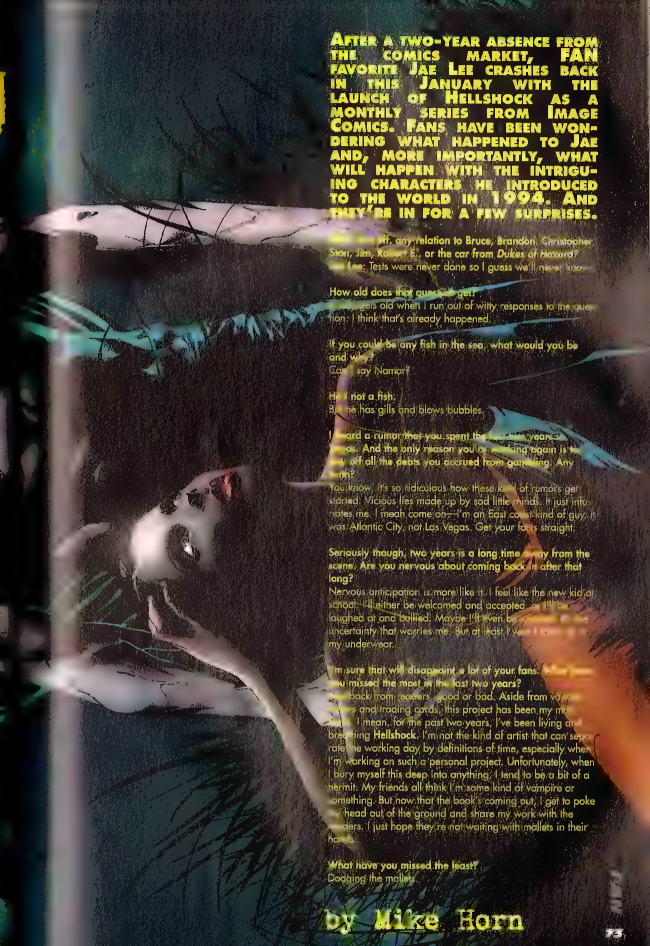
This summer, Omega Force will come back to Earth, literally. Washington, DC will be the backdrop as Omega Force uncovers Karad's insidious political manipulations designed to leave the Earth ripe for conquest. "We are excited about the upcoming three issue mini-series," says Michael, "We will even have a couple of covers produced by some of the industry's best artists. Doug Mahnke, whose latest work can be seen in **Lobo** on the **Mask**, and Gordon Purcell, of **X-Files** and **Star Trek** fame, have agreed to show the readers their vision of Omega Force."

We chose our name, Archetype Productions, for a reason," said Jonah. "Archetype means 'an ideal model from which all things of the same type are copied.' Productions means 'the act or process of making literary or artistic goods for human wants.' The name says it all. We aren't there yet. But we will be..."

INDY PRESS PROFILE

Jonah and Michael Cagley

SHOCKED
again



After a two-year absence from the comics market, fan favorite Jae Lee crashes back in this January with the launch of Hellshock As a monthly series from Image Comics. Fans have been wondering what happened to Jae and, more importantly, what will happen with the intriguing characters he introduced to the world in 1994. And they're in for a few surprises.

[illegible] Mr. any relation to Bruce, Brandon, Christopher, Shari, Jim, Kolchak, E.T., or the car from *Dukes of Hazzard*?
Jae Lee: Tests were never done so I guess we'll never know.

How old does that guess put you?
[illegible] old when I run out of witty responses to the question. I think that's already happened.

If you could be any fish in the sea, what would you be and why?
Can I say Namor?

He's not a fish.
But he has gills and blows bubbles.

I heard a rumor that you spent the last few years in Vegas. And the only reason you are working again is to pay off all the debts you accrued from gambling. Any truth?
You know, it's so ridiculous how these kind of rumors get started. Vicious lies made up by sad little minds. It just infuriates me. I mean come on—I'm an East coast kind of guy. It was Atlantic City, not Las Vegas. Get your facts straight.

Seriously though, two years is a long time away from the scene. Are you nervous about coming back in after that long?
Nervous anticipation is more like it. I feel like the new kid at school. I'll either be welcomed and accepted or I'll be laughed at and bullied. Maybe I'll even be [illegible] uncertainty that worries me. But at least I won't have to wear my underwear.

I'm sure that will disappoint a lot of your fans. What have you missed the most in the last two years?
[illegible] back from soldiers, good or bad. Aside from video games and trading cards, this project has been my release. I mean, for the past two years, I've been living and breathing **Hellshock**. I'm not the kind of artist that can separate the working day by definitions of time, especially when I'm working on such a personal project. Unfortunately, when I bury myself this deep into anything, I tend to be a bit of a hermit. My friends all think I'm some kind of vampire or something. But now that the book's coming out, I get to poke my head out of the ground and share my work with the readers. I just hope they're not waiting with mallets in their hands.

What have you missed the least?
Cracking the mallet.

by Mike Horn

Let's talk about what's happening now. What's Hellshock about?
The main character is named Daniel He's able to see into the land of the dead. Or so he thinks. It's like a waking nightmare for him. It gets to the point where he can't separate reality from this seemingly imagined fantasy world. His mind shatters and he's left in a disabled state. But when he awakens, he realizes that he's brought something back with him. Knowledge about creation, about God, about everything. He knows the secrets of the universe. It's what he does with this new found knowledge that sets up the storyline.

What have you got planned for the first issue, to kick things off?
Well, for starters, it's double-sized. I wanted the first issue to be special. After all, this single issue is responsible for laying the groundwork for the entire series. But on a more personal side, this new series represents a rebirth for myself.

How so?
Well, if you like my work, then thank you very much and the last thing I'd want to do is talk you out of it. On the other hand, if you hate my work, guess what? I agree with you. But wait—before you think I'm some kind of neurotic freak, let me explain. I see myself as having gone through three phases in my career. The first phase was my work on **Namor**, **WildC.A.T.S Trilogy**, etc. I was bombastic and energetic. I was so excited just to be drawing comics. I loved drawing big panels and splash pages up the whazoo. It was as if I was flying by the seat of my pants going by instinct.

A lot of people liked that style.
I did too when I was doing it at the time, but it does nothing for the story. And that's what I'm trying to get at. It wasn't until the first **Hellshock** mini-series that I began to realize the importance of storytelling.

Was that change brought about because you had taken on the mantle of writer as well as artist?
Right. Walking in someone else's shoes and all that. Yeah, so there I was, an artist trying to tell a story using tools I was unfamiliar with. I may not have been satisfied with the end result, but you know what? It was a step in the right direction. It made me focus on what was important.

So Hellshock made you see the light? It showed you the way? There's an ad in there somewhere.
It's oddly appropriate, isn't it?

So what is it you're doing differently?
Well, there's more thinking going on now. I'm concentrating on storytelling, anatomy, realism, facial expressions, backgrounds, and establishing mood. I've also done tons of research to reinforce the story elements. This kind of change doesn't happen overnight either. It's like I've spent the last two years training for the boxing heavyweight championship or something.

Did you see the Tyson/Holyfield fight?
Yeah. I was hoping to make back the money I lost in Atlantic City, but...oh well.

Is this going to be a monthly series?
Absolutely.

Here's a tough one.
Uh-oh.

There are skeptics who may doubt that you will actually produce on a consistent basis. How would you address this issue?
I've invested the past two years in this project. I'm not about to let it just go to waste. And please, don't confuse my absence from the market for tardiness; that time was necessary if I wanted to improve. Doing a regular monthly book takes a huge commitment. I needed time to let my writing abilities grow to match my artwork. I can't just wake up one day and say, "Hey, I think I'll start writing." That's where I made the mistake the first time. I've worked the story over and over to the point that I can sit back and be proud of it. I have a year's worth of stories prepared, a backbone for the **Hellshock** epic to grow out of. It's all set, folks. I have too much riding on this to mess it up. This is my baby. But ultimately, nothing I could possibly say would convince skeptics. So I'll have to prove it month after month.

You've announced a deal to do Hellshock Action Figures. What do you have in mind for these?
The toy will be produced in conjunction with Palisades Marketing and Dynamic Forces. We're in the process right now of coming up with ways to make the **Hellshock** figure stand out among the rest. I'm designing a costume that will be unique to the action figure along with various accessories that still need to be worked out. We're looking to release the toy during the summer of '97.

What other Hellshock products will you have?
Well, for fine art lovers, there's the Hellshock giant-sized lithograph. And for...well, for T-shirt lovers, there's the Hellshock T-shirts.

Where do you see yourself this time next year?
In the movie theater watching the remastered *Star Wars* for the 167th time. Oh, and reading **Hellshock** #12 of course. ■

Joe Lee (in middle) with friends.

FLOGGING A DEAD HORSE

BY PAUL JENKINS

In case you hadn't noticed—and those bloody great gobbets of dueling neon ink on this month's front cover are the subtle marketing ploy that gives it away—you're currently reading **FAN**'s Special Issue Number Twenty. To mark this Memorable Occasion™ with my own particular scent, then, it seemed appropriate for me to write a retrospective. No matter that only two of my columns have been printed so far...this is what I would've done if I'd been here:

July, 1988: I break into comics!

As a fresh-faced fifteen year-old, I jump ship from a Welsh potato trawler in New York harbor and swim to the waiting arms of Lady Liberty, who shelters me from pursuing INS Afghan hounds. That same night, I break into the offices of DC Comics under cover of darkness. After my subsequent arrest, I give my name as, "Jim Shooter, and have you met my 500 pound gorilla law firm recently?" All charges are dropped. God bless America!

July, 1990: X-Men #1 breaks sales records with 7 million circulation!

All my fault, I'm afraid. During a visit to men's bathroom at the San Diego Comicon, I cut myself shaving in front of then Marvel Sales Guru, trusty Lou Bank. I ask Lou if he can pass me some toilet paper, but he mistakenly thinks I'm asking if he can *pass off* some toilet paper, presumably in the guise of a comic book. That same book—**X-Men #1**—becomes the hottest seller of all time, alienating tens of thousands of readers in the process. Lou moves on to Dark Horse Publishing and continues to send me poison pen letters to this day...

April, 1992: First "Flogging a Dead Horse" column appears!

A couple of years before the first issue of **FAN**, actually. The column begins life in an obscure Alternative fanzine, **Heavy Mental Underground Chix Comix**. Needing a name for my new column, I decide to telephone all of my industry friends, but when he draws a blank, I crank call famous comic book professionals that I've never met instead. The winner is normally-subdued Mister-Nice-Guy, Scott McCloud, who thinks I'm wasting my time and doesn't have anything nice to say, apparently.

August, 1993: The Majestic Years!

As this column makes huge gains in both popularity and lawsuits, I begin moonlighting as editor-in-chief at short-lived Majestic Entertainment in Cincinnati. The Pentecostal-owned company promptly goes belly up, and I leave town with a debt to the IRS, a promissory note for my lost wages, and a CD collection: **Jimmy Swaggart—All the Best to You!**

December, 1994: You, the fans, decide...

In a **FAN** special contest, this column becomes the forum for the biggest comic special event of all time. In a battle to the death, you, the fans, decide who must die, Mister Fantastic or Batman. By a curious twist of mathematics, artist Rob Liefeld garners 103% of the vote, but cannot be reached for execution.

August, 1995: "Flogging a Dead Horse" wins Nobel prize for literature!

It would've...if I'd been writing it then.

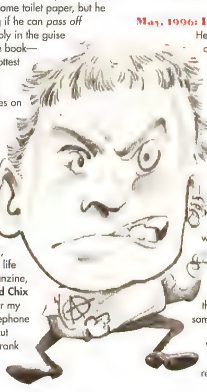
May, 1996: Lawsuits, lawsuits, lawsuits!

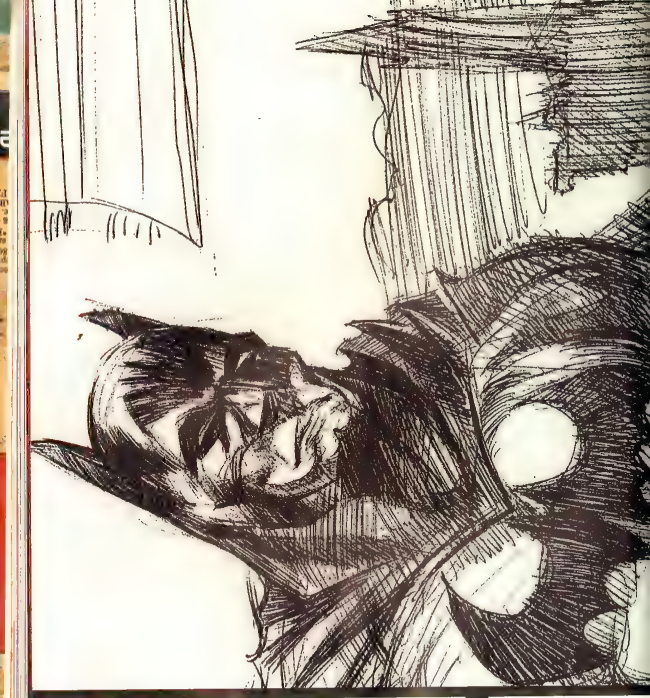
Hey...remember when we did that one about [redacted] and the weird thing he has for newly-sheared sheep? And then, right after the column was printed, he got charged with [redacted], even though it was a complete lie? And his career was ruined! Ha ha! Wasn't that funny?!

February, 1999: We pass the century mark!

Cal Ripken Jr. shows up at our hundred-issue party, looking grumpy and envious of my success. He tosses out the first ball to Boris Yeltsin, who is never one to turn down a free lunch. Industry luminaries abound but are quelled with riot gas! I am accepted into the "Comic Book Columnist Hall of Fame." Curiously, this consists of an empty room and some fungus-covered cheese dip.*

*This article has been edited to conform with the author's version of reality.





dark nights

Occult forces at work in Gotham City. The Batman accused of mass murder. The intervention of the dead. In Batman/Deadman, writer James Robinson and painter John Estes tackle issues of life and death, as well as reincarnation and retribution. Dark nights, indeed.

by Scott Braden

OF DEADMEN AND DARK KNIGHTS

John Estes has just finished painting a scene where the Batman has slaughtered a room full of people in a chic Gotham restaurant. You read it right, kids, the Batman kills innocents in this story. "Actually, something has possessed the Batman's body," Estes admits, "which results in manslaughter and makes the Batman a wanted man for the duration of the book."

That alone should tell readers that **Batman/Deadman**, a 96 page hardcover graphic novel from DC Comics, is not your

ordinary Batman story. And with the Dark Knight sharing top billing with Boston Brand, the murdered aerialist known as Deadman who haunts the world as an avenging spirit, Estes and James Robinsan have created a "team-up story" in the tradition of **The Brave And The Bold**, while adding their own special twists. One of those twists is their putting aside years and years of continuity in an effort to tell their own story without getting bogged down in specifics.

"At the time I wrote it," Robinson explains, "there had obviously been a lot going on in **Batman**—with his broken back, etcetera. It was then suggested that it might be a good idea to set our story in the past, so that if there were problems in the Batman continuity, they wouldn't conflict, and I thought that was a good idea. It just sort of happened, in terms of the story, that we do sort of show or suggest at least how Deadman went from being the Neal Adams muscular figure to the Kelley Jones skeletal version. And that's just sort of a by-product of the story. It just happened very organically, so we just kept it in. It wasn't like I was trying to be *Mr. Fanboy* and explain visual changes in continuity."

Robinson pauses for a second, adding, "Being that **Batman/Deadman**'s a graphic novel, I felt it unfair to have a lot of backstory that readers would need to grasp in order to enjoy the book. So I deliberately did not use the League of Assassins or Boston Brand's brother, Cleveland, or any of that and instead just concentrated on a tight story that stands alone in its own right—making the two characters important players, but doing it without a lot of their history as a crucial part of the plot."

"Batman and Deadman are actually peripheral as far as the story goes anyway," Estes says, jumping in. "The story's actually about a young man who's been running away from things most of his life, until he finds out that he has AIDS, and for reasons unexplained, comes to Gotham. Throughout the story, he's having to come to terms with the fact that he can run away from other responsibilities and everything else in his life, but he can't run away from this disease that he has. And that's where Deadman comes in. Deadman's actually sent by Rama Krishna, a godlike spirit, to protect the drifter and escort him through the duration of his life so that he can then die. I don't want to give too much away, but it's important that he has Deadman to guard over him—very important! And as for the Batman, he gets pulled into the young man's story along the way."

DEATH ROLE

An interesting facet to **Batman/Deadman** is the use of parallel characters throughout the story, as well as their association with life and the hereafter. Robinson and Estes have played with a cast that, being either opposite numbers to one another or a lot more alike than they'd like to admit, revolve around themes of death and reincarnation.

Estes explains, "We have in the character of Deadman a ghost whose closeness to life, along with his inability to experience it, is torture for him. At the same time, we have this young man who's HIV positive—a man who knows he's going to die, but is helpless to do anything about it. Suddenly, he's put on a clock, making Deadman and himself flip-sides of the same coin."

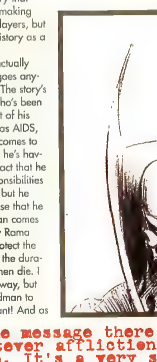
Something else compelling, if not a little controversial, about **Batman/Deadman** is its use of AIDS in the storyline. Though not the typical Batman plot, the graphic novel's storyline does group the project with other recent works such as **Batman: The Ultimate Evil** and **Batman: Death of the Innocents** in what appears to be DC Comics' effort to produce socially-relevant projects using mainstream heroes. To Robinson, though, writing **Batman/Deadman** was just his chance to tell another story.

"One of the perks of having some sort of reputation in comics is that you can come to DC with projects," Robinson explains. "This project was really that John Estes and I wanted to work together, and we both wanted to work with Archie Goodwin, who was the editor of **Deadman** and the secondary editor of **Batman**. That was the starting point. I'm really not aware that this is such a revolutionary thing, in dealing with AIDS. The disease is so commonplace in our culture that we accept AIDS as a part of life. Bringing it into a story just worked in terms of the storyline.

"At the same token," caveats Robinson, "everything also needs to be done in the right way. I tend to write **Starman** as if I was working in the Hayes Code, which, for readers that don't know, was the code that regulated what was put into films in the 30s through the 60s—so writers had to be creative showing sexual passion between characters, romance, violence, etc. As a result, they did some of the most romantic, sexual films around, as they forced the viewer to use their imagination more. With comics, you can get a lot across. Now, I think if you're dealing with AIDS as a disease that people can catch and die from, then you can deal with it quite easily in comics. If you dwell on *how* people catch AIDS, then you've perhaps taken on a subject matter that certain people may not feel is suitable for an all-ages comic book. But, you know, I think the important part of AIDS is that it can affect everybody. So focusing on the means by which you can contract it is often not the important aspect to tell."

Robinson pauses, then adds, "The one thing is, we do not specify how the character catches AIDS, we just know he has caught AIDS, and I think if there is a message, part of it is that this character has a greater destiny beyond his time on Earth, and I think the message there is not to prejudge people due to whatever afflictions they may get while going though life. It's a very simple message, but I think it's worth noting. I was told a story the other day of a young boy in England who had been playing in a field and who had stabbed himself with an old junkie's needle, and he had been told, until the tests came in to find out if it was HIV-positive or negative, not to come to school. As much as we'd like to think people are becoming more tolerant and aware, that kind of prejudging and ignorance is still as bad as it was a couple of years ago."

And in its own way, that ignorance may be another villain these dark knights are fighting as well ■



I think the message there is not to prejudge people due to whatever afflictions they may get while going though life. It's a very simple message, but I think it's worth noting. -James Robinson

ALEX ROSS
HAS GOT IT
COVERED.

Stay Tuned.

Aside from having one of the coolest job titles in existence, Experimental Projects Editor Andrew Helfer also has the honor of being the man responsible for one of the coolest comic projects out there, the ***Big Book*** *series from DC's Paradox Press imprint. From freaks to weirdos to conspiracies to death to the upcoming book on losers, this series focuses on some of the most unique topics in either fiction or non-fiction. The* ***Big Books*** *have not only been groundbreaking in the world of comics, but popular with both fans and critics alike.* ***FAN*** *caught up with Andy at his office to ask a few questions and pitch a few ideas.*

BIG BOOKS ARE BIG

by Benn Ray

THE BIG BIRTH

When walking into Andrew Helfer's office at DC Comics in New York, you'll notice that it's not quite like most comic editors' offices. He admits, "I've got the strangest bookshelves of perhaps anyone at DC because my shelves aren't filled with comics, they're filled with reference books." He uses these books as the basis to help provide information for the vast amount of research it takes to put out one of DC/Paradox Press' **Big Books**.

With so many different avenues available in comics, Andy decided upon taking this one. It seems odd a busy editor would even bother to come up with a concept that involves so much research and...well, *work*, in the first place. "I'm always trying to find something new to produce for comic readers," he explains. "Comics today have centered into two genres: superheroes and the supernatural. I've always felt that comics should be more than a vehicle for one genre or another. I know from my own personal reading habits, non-fiction tends to be more amazing, astounding and ridiculous than fiction ever could be. In fact, most great fiction is inspired by real events. Where do novelists get their ideas? From life, from newspapers, magazines and from stories that they've heard from people. Fiction is a distillation of fact. I wanted do something that's non-fiction. I knew that because it was comics, it had to be slightly zany and over the top. So I was thinking of was when I was a kid, we used to have these things called **The Big Books**. **The Big Book of Dinosaurs**, **The Big Book of Insects**. They were huge compendiums of everything that you wanted to know about these subjects. Now that we've grown older, what are the subjects that interest us? Maybe dinosaurs, insects, flowers and birds still interest some of us, but subjects that we're most interested in are urban legends, conspiracies, death, freaks, criminals, etc. Those are the subjects which seem to interest adults. So I combined that comprehensive compendium sensibility with these non-fiction subjects, and the **Big Books** were born."

Andy believes that it's precisely the factual elements of his subject matter that make **The Big Books** so popu-

for. According to him, "When it's horrifying, there's the element of 'thank god it's not me,' like a car wreck. We're doing **The Big Book of Losers**, covering products, people, events, inventions, we pretty much run the gamut, but I like to focus on people. You might think you're a loser, but when you see these guys, you're going to think you're a winner. So it makes you feel good, it's reassuring that these fates haven't befallen you. In the case of **Freaks**, there are these amazing stories that are hard to believe, but they're true. These people were born with incredible deformities and adversity and have managed to conquer it and get on top of the heap. There are a lot of amazing stories out there, and they're very rarely gathered together. A lot of the people we cover have entire books written about them, but **The Big Books** have a **Cliff's Notes** sensibility. You can read about these people in 3 pages and get a sense of who they are. We have bibliographies in the back, so if you find it especially interesting, you can go out and get the books. Each of these characters could fill a **Big Book**. In **The Big Book of Losers** we have Alan Freed, the disc jockey. There's been books written about him, and we cover him in two pages. Milli Vanilli, Joe Meek, these guys are losers."

THE WORD

Subject matter is the key. Losers? Everyone loves a loser. Freaks? Same thing. Conspiracy? Yup, that too. The catch is coming up with the right word. Andy says, "It all starts with a word. The word is the thing that people see. The first thing that people see is going to be **The Big Book** of what? The word has to be compelling, it's the purest distillation of a theme that you'll ever see. 'Losers' is a great word, people want to read about losers. **The Big Book of Thugs** was originally called **The Big Book of Gangs**, but the problem was people were saying 'Where are the Bloods?' Where are the Hell's Angels?' We wanted this book to be a look back on things, not just gangs around today. The gang scene has been around for hundreds and hundreds of years, it's nothing new."

Plus, you wouldn't want some gang banger looking for you after he sees himself as a cartoon. Andy confides, "Well that was another aspect. Marvel was sued by Hell's Angels when they had a comic called **Hell's Angel**. The Hell's Angels protect their copyright tenaciously, so we didn't want to get into that. We also didn't want people knocking on our door saying 'How dare you say this.' We tend to try to look back as opposed to be in the present with these things."

BIG BOOKS TO WATCH FOR

The next **Big Book** due out is **The Big Book of Losers**, featuring the varied artistic stylings of Jason Lutes, Jeff Nicholson, Shannon Wheeler, Justin Greene, Joe Sacco, Peter Kuper, and many more. Here's a look at what tentatively waits in the wings:

The Big Book of Vice

This was originally called The Big Book of Sin. However, Andy says, "We got away from **The Big Book of Sin** because vices are much more fun. Steve Vance is writing it, with 6 chapters on the six great vices of man. Basically, the book asks the question, 'What is so compelling about these things that we know are wrong, we know are bad, we know are immoral or unhelpful, yet millions of us continue to do them?' Hopefully, this book will help answer those questions. We shall see."

The Big Book of Bad

This book is a potpourri of bad. Andy describes it as, "The best of the worst of everything. It covers both real and fictional bad guys. For the first time, we're going to do fictional bad guys, like little overviews of the life of Iago, Richard III, Dracula, Fu Manchu, Moriarty. We'll also cover a lot of real bad guys: Judas, Jack the Ripper, and Joseph Stalin, these are the major bad guys of time. Hitler may be conspicuous in his absence, but we already covered him in **The Big Book of Weirdos**. There's even a section on bad taste which will cover people like Liberace."

The Big Book of Martyrs

Andy is especially happy about the title of this **Big Book**. "See, now that's a good word. If you say **The Big Book of Saints**...eh, but you say **The Big Book of Martyrs** ...about the lives of the Saints and Martyrs in all their grisly glory.... We're handling this one totally straight, we're not going to make our usual editorial quips. This subject matter speaks for itself. I hope this book will

rest as comfortably on a bathroom magazine rack as on a **Bible** stand. Whether people believe it or not, or understand the significance of it or not, those stories are taken as fact by some people. All we're going to do is visualize those things, which is nothing they didn't do in the 15th century. There are books that are woodcuts which show the process of the martyrs being tortured. We're just updating the 16th century artistic tradition for the '90s, which is the visualization of these incidents. It's being written by John (**Judge Dredd**) Wagner."

The Big Book of the Weird, Wild West

I feel mixed emotions of disappointment and happiness when he says they're doing a **Big Book** on the Wild West. That's one of the ideas on the piece of paper in my pocket that my hand was clutching. I wanted to suggest that one and someone already beat me to it. "We're doing that with the guys from Mojo Press, he says. "They live in Texas, so they must know what they're talking about. It's major Wild Western weirdos: Judge Roy Bean, Samuel Colt, Wyatt Earp, Buffalo Bill, Annie Oakley, etc. We've also got a section on inventions and their Inventors—barbed wire, the gatling gun, etc." Ugh. Oh well, I still have a few more ideas that need pitching.

The Big Book of the Unexplained

This one is "A sequel to **The Big Book of Conspiracies**," he reveals. "Doug Moench is working on it right now. **The Big Book of the Unexplained** is the tentative title. I'm toying with the idea of calling it **The Big Book of the Strange** even though Doug's been calling it **The Big Book of the Paranormal**. It's going to cover a lot of those unexplained things like the Abominable Snowman, UFOs, going back to the same territory that he pioneered in **The Big Book of Conspiracies**. It should be out by next summer. So we're rocking."

MY TURN TO PITCH

That's a full docket, but I want more **Big Books**. So I pull the list crumpled in my pocket out and start pitching the ideas to Andy that are scrawled in crayon. I want to see just what kind of word it takes to fill the spot behind the phrase "**Big Book of.**"

My favorite word seemed so obvious, it must've been pitched already

Sex

And of course, it was. "That's one of the ideas that always goes around," Andy says. "The question is how do you do **The Big Book of Sex** without getting pulled off the shelves? It's an interesting subject, unfortunately it's one of those times where the graphic form works against you."

Serial Killers

These guys have always intrigued me, but he poo-poos that one as well, "Too crass. It seems like an obvious choice, but at the same token, it's just going to be panel after panel of people killing other people. Ultimately, those stories lack a sense of wonder. When you talk about **The Big Book of Martyrs**, for every horrid act, there's a miracle that proceeds it. So there's that sense of wonder. With the serial killers, they're just these losers. My initial idea was to do one in the first 4 books, but the more I thought about it, the more I thought it's going to be too cheap a thrill. So we passed by that one."

Natural Disasters

Everybody loves a natural disaster, or so I thought. Unfortunately, Andy clarifies that misconception for me, "With disasters, what happens when you do the story? Everybody gets wiped out. But it's even tougher than that. When everybody gets wiped out, it's going to be all the panels that no one wants to draw. It's going to be the panel with 60 guys or 5,000 people being destroyed or a city tumbling before an earthquake."

Alien Encounters

Sci-fi is big, isn't it? Surely a **Big Book of Alien Encounters** would be huge. Again, I'm mistaken. "There's already so much of that in **The Unexplained**. **The Unexplained** is broader, so it allows you to get out of the subject before it gets boring or too repetitive. So in a way," he patronizes, "we are doing that one."

Cults

I'm starting to get a little annoyed. No one likes having their ideas dismissed, and I should know, I'm very good at doing that to people back at the **FAN** offices. "Cult" is a good word and an interesting topic. Surely, Helfer (I'm too irritated to call him by his first name at this point) will leap at the idea of **The Big Book of Cults**. Shaking his head in a manner somewhat like a matador waving a red cape in front of a bull, he says, "A lot of times, after doing so many of these books, you find some of these subjects have been dealt with at length in other books, that it's hard to come up with new stuff. **The Big Book of Losers** has some cult stuff in it, **The Big Book of Bad** specifically has bad religion [not the band], which includes a lot of cult stuff. Sometimes the material is scattered across some of the other books. It's occurred to me to perhaps recompile some of that stuff in single editions, but who knows."

Celebrity Scandals

Okay, so I was down to two and getting a little panicky. "How about **The Big Book of Celebrity Scandals**," I inquire. After a long pause, he responds "No comment." "No comment," I scream, "what the hell does that mean?"

Ghosts

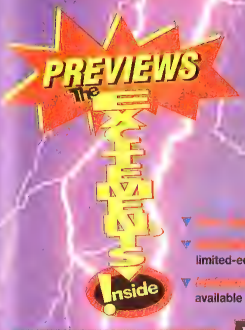
Now I'm standing, glaring across his desk covered with hundreds of **Big Book** proposals. "Ghosts," I say.

"We were already thinking about that one," he claims.

"The hell you were," I yell as I lunge at him from across the desk. Unfortunately, I've failed to notice two DC security guards, the ones in the Superman costumes, who've come in behind me.

It is at this point that I'm escorted out of the DC offices. Walking back to the train station, I continue to stare at the wrinkled piece of paper with my suggestions on it. Then I notice, in my haste, I had overlooked one more, written on the back. **The Big Book of Pranks**. That one he definitely would have taken. Damn.

At least **The Big Book of Losers** comes out next month. That's a good word, "Loser." Now why didn't I think of that one? F



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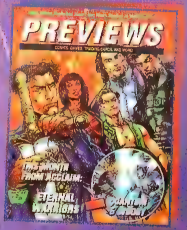

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PREVIEWS is a publication of Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc., the industry's leading distributor of new comics and related merchandise.

For those keeping score, John Byrne has tackled a man of steel, a woman of wonder, and even the gods themselves. Now, on the eve of Batman/Captain America's release, arguably his best work to date, "the hardest working man in comics" takes time out of his busy schedule to give FAN the in's and out's behind his war-epic, his opinion of crossover madness, and why a Caped Crusader is better than a Dark Knight every time.

MR STORY

FAN: There's been talk for years that you were going to do this project. How long have you had Batman/Captain America in mind?

John Byrne: Batman/Captain America was casually a story that I've had in my head for about twenty years—ever since the first **Superman/Spider-Man** crossover came out. Everyone was speculating at the time during which Marvel and DC characters were going to team-up next, and the ones I most wanted to see were Batman and Captain America. From that moment on, I started to play with the idea in my head, and as the story started to take shape, I realized that the perfect setting for it would have to be World War II. That way, I could play with a different kind of a Batman in a different kind of an environment. I could also write Cap in his own environment, and at the same time, have Bucky to bounce off Robin with. Hell, half of the fun of the book was pairing Captain America and Robin (laughter)!

Since both Batman and Captain America are archetypes—one being the Dark Avenger of the Night, while the other is the Patriotic Hero—how does one approach them storywise?

Personally, I tend to write the characters that I used to like to read. In fact, when I begin writing any character, I first ask myself what it was that I enjoyed about this character and how can I recapture that. In answering your question, yes, they are archetypes, as you say. They both are very primal characters that knew who they were and what they had to do once upon a time—although Batman's not the same archetype then that he is now.

How's he changed?

The Batman of the '40s, the one I use in **Batman/Cap**, was always having a good time when he fought crime. The definitive Batman of that period for me is a big, impressive Batman swinging in through a window at the end of his Batrope, kicking somebody in the head with just this BIG smile on his face! Batman used to enjoy himself! He wasn't grim or gritty about beating up the bad guys, because, that's what he did. And what he did had to be the best catharsis in the world. It's got to be better than therapy. He's got all these dark demons that torture him, so he goes out and breaks people's legs to help him get over it.

What about Captain America?

He's the living legend of World War II, period. In my story, he's in World War II, and the fun thing about doing **Batman/Captain America** was that I didn't have to do the introspective Captain America, because he hasn't gotten there yet. Cap's not walking around going, "Oh darn, I screwed up and Bucky's dead," because Bucky's not dead yet. So it was actually a chance for me to do a version of Cap that I'd never done before. This is my first World War II story for Cap, and honestly, if I were given the chance to do a World War II Cap series, I probably would because, again, here's a character who knows exactly what he's doing and what he's doing is for the right reasons.

Talking about heroes acting for the *right reasons*, are you trying to reintroduce the "old school" hero into

comics with Batman/Captain America?

I'm trying to. As I said to Denny O'Neil a while ago, my not-so-secret dream is that **Batman/Captain America** is going to be every bit as successful and every bit as influential as **Dark Knight** was, and that it will create the new trend in comics which is *fun!*

Unfortunately, there's a tag onto this—just as **Dark Knight** basically generated grim and gritty, which later became glum and surly, I fear that within a year and a half, fun will become silly. People just don't get it.

So you'd like to see Batman as the Caped Crusader replace Batman as the Dark Knight?

Well, yeah. But something you have to consider is that one of the most important things that people missed about **Dark Knight**, even I missed it on the first pass and I talked to Frank at length about what he was doing, was that Frank was dealing with a Batman who'd gone crazy, and the reason he'd gone crazy was integral to his character. Frank was writing about a Batman who'd retired, *and what's the most important thing about Batman?* Batman swears on his parents' grave that he will spend the rest of his life warring on criminals! So, by virtue of the fact, and this is what Frank was saying with this book, Batman retired, he hung it up, and not being Batman drove him insane. Being Batman is a catharsis for Bruce Wayne. Again, being Batman is his best therapy. Hanging up the cape pushed Bruce over the edge, so when he came back, he was "Nuts Batman!" Frank's Batman was overcompensating, and everybody has played it that way since. I mean, **Dark Knight** somehow became part of continuity, as if it was the Batman we were dealing with *now*, instead of a Batman of some impossible future. And that future is completely impossible now since Frank had Batman retiring when Jason Todd was killed. So those fans out there that voted Robin to death also voted Dark Knight into imaginary story status.

Since you've put so much time and effort into Batman/Captain America, a company crossover, what are your thoughts on the phenomena many call "crossover madness?"

With the exception of **Darkseid/Galactus**, which was brilliant of course (laughter), I haven't been real terribly impressed with them. I love what John Romita, Jr. did with the **Punisher/Batman.** I loved the art on it. It was great to see him do Batman, and I quite liked what Mark Bagley did on **Spider-Man/Batman**. I thought the whole **Marvel Versus DC** was just, well, okay. Still, having the fans vote on who won was really dumb, because it was an obvious conclusion. Marvel sells better, therefore Marvel is going to win.

Don't get me wrong though, I still like the idea of crossovers. One of the last conversations I had with Mark Gruenwald was that I would love to be able to do an ongoing crossover book where every month a different DC guy would team up with a different Marvel guy. I even said that by the time I get around to team-up the Living Mummy with Brother Power, the Geek, you can stop me (laughter)! It's a neat idea, and of course, not to put too fine a point on it, it's about the only way I can work with Marvel these days.

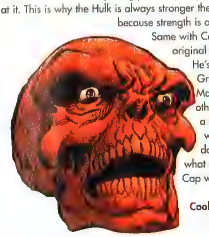
Do you see Marvel and DC actually publishing such a book?

I doubt it. I mean, they've got this **All Access** thing, but that's something I don't know how to describe. I mean, it's trying to explain how company crossovers can actually happen, and you should never explain how these things work. The first **Superman/Spider-Man** didn't try to say the reason they met each other was because there was a meeting of the cosmic fonebones, or whatever. These guys, for the sake of argument, always existed in the same universe, period. And I think that's the way to play it.

Still, I would love to see a monthly crossover book happen. I think it could be a lot of fun for both the fans and the people doing it, provided it was done with the proper amount of respect and consideration for both characters involved, and provided that we could get over this fan fixation these days of the characters having to fight. When it was announced on-line that I was going to do this **Batman/Captain America** thing, the first thing people said was, 'Who wins?' Well, the Red Skull and the Joker lose because they're the bad guys. My heroes don't fight each other. In fact, that's the reason I have that sequence with Steve Rogers duking it out with Bruce Wayne, so that I could sort of throw a bone to the people who would want them to fight, but also come up with a way in which they would fight that wouldn't last a half a panel, because I couldn't see Batman and Captain America really fighting, they're too well matched.

I know what you're saying, John, and I agree with you. But just between you, me, and all our readers out there...Batman vs. Cap. Who'd win?

Cap. A friend of mine summed up Batman very well a few years ago. He said that Batman is the second best at everything. Its like you can pick any one guy who's a better gymnast, the better electrician, the better chemist, the better whatever, but Batman does all of it and that's what makes him Batman. That's what makes him The World's Greatest Detective. In a comic book universe where they both existed on the same planet, the one guy in the world who would be a better fighter than Batman would be Captain America. It's John Byrne's specialist rule. If it's the only thing you do, you get to be the best at it. This is why the Hulk is always stronger than the Thing, because strength is all the Hulk has. Same with Cap. Cap is the original super soldier. He's "The World's Greatest Fighting Machine." On the other hand, being a fighter is part of what Batman does, but it's all Cap does, so Cap wins.



Cool.

busted knuckles

CHOOSE 'EM OR LOSE 'EM

It's that semi-mystical time again. Time for me to once again impose my likes and dislikes upon your unfertilized eyes and ears. This month I'm talkin' about some good stuff you shouldn't miss as well as some bad stuff that you should avoid like an ex-wife.

COMIC BOOKS:

Here's just a couple of comics that you may or may not be readin'. Let the lesson begin!

1. Body Bags
by Jason Pearson
Image Comics
It's brutal. It not only pushes the envelope, it wads it up, drags it from the back of the truck and shreds it. This is "The Busted Knuckle Book Of The Month." Jason wraps his dialogue around the action like a garrote around the neck of a squealer. The artwork is cinematic and the characters are a real hip. A lot of folks say that Hitman by Garth Ennis is the Tarantino type of book. Nope. Garth's a British writer so he don't count. Body Bags is the Pulp Fiction of comics. Grab your plasma gun and hop on.

2. Superman Adventures
by Scott McCloud, Rick Burchett, and Terry Austin
DC Comics
Just like another favorite comic of mine, Batman and Robin Adventures, this book is full of good, clean art and excellent storytelling that anyone, no matter what age or sex, will enjoy. This book is a no-brainer—everyone will enjoy it if they don't, then they're as suspect as someone who wants the Berlin Wall built back up.

3. The Fantastic Four
by Jim Lee, Brandon Choi, and Scott Williams
Marvel Comics
The major right thing that this comic does is the fact that it brings characterization to the center ring. It's got beautiful artwork and just enough soap opera to satisfy any reader that ain't bringin' old baggage to the party. These boys have taken a spark from the massive creative flame that Stan Lee and Jack Kirby gave us and have started a fire of their own. There is more than enough art and story to cover the $1.95 price of the book.

4. Curse of the Spawn
by Alan McElroy, Dwayne Turner, and Danny Miki
Image Comics
If you've ever seen The X-Files or Millennium, then you're aware of what I call "The Creep Out Factor." Curse Of The Spawn is slathered with it. With some of the most detailed artwork you'll find out there, Turner and Miki get the Flint Henry Award for doin' the doodle. Writer Alan McElroy seems to grasp the Spawn mythos even more so than Spawn creator Todd McFarlane. (Yeah, Todd, so what are ya gonna do—fire me??) This is a spooky book that doesn't rely on gore and splatter to shock you. All of the shock comes from the popping eyeballs and burning flesh that lives in your own mind. It's monthly, it's a $1.95, and it's creepier than Todd McFarlane on a rant.

Here are some random shots at some other comics and those that do comics:

1. Kill It, Anything This Ugly Should Be Dead:
Vamperotica and anything lookin' like it.

2. I Thought They Only Put Ya To Sleep When Ya Had Surgery:
Any Big Entertainment comic of your choice.
Any Star Trek Comic.

3. Let's Ride The Dead Horse Some More.
Sovereign Seven

4. Do Ya Have To Draw Me A Picture To Make Me Understand It?? ...Yup!:
Prophet
Vampirella

5. I'm Not Bitter, I Just Draw That Way:
Wonder Woman by John Byrne.

6. I Used To Mess My Pants On Purpose Just To Shock My Parents:
Erik Larsen.

7. I Thought They Only Neutered Dogs:
The Punisher

8. When An X turns to zzzzzzzzzzzzzzz-norezzzzzzzzzzzzzz
Generation X

9. Okay, You Scared Me...Now Quit It!.
Scare Tactics

10. After This Column A Bull's Eye Will Be My Apparel:
Beau Smith

Well, take 'em to heart or tear 'em apart, it doesn't much matter to me I've vented so a few more innocent folks will live. Just remember, never be afraid to speak your mind, as long as ya can back it up with facts or a fist to the face

by Beau Smith

Crossovers Once upon a time they were some of the most unique and exciting stories a comic book reader could hope for—a meeting of two characters who proved to have something in common, doing battle against darker, deadlier foes than either could face alone. Now, with multiple crossover storylines a regular part of every company's editorial plan, the special quality that made these events so distinctive has been diluted and driven into the ground. Every once in a while, however, a crossover comes along that recaptures the fun and excitement of seeing two favorite heroes meet and join forces Billy Tucci, creator of one of the hottest characters around—Shi—has finally realized a dream by introducing his woman warrior to Marvel Comics' Man Without Fear himself Daredevil. FAN talked with Billy about crossovers, conventions, and the future of Crusade...

BY ARNOLD T. BLUMBERG

IAN: Let's talk about the big *Shi/Daredevil* crossover. We know you're very excited about this story.

Bill: Yeah. First and foremost this is my dream project. I never even read comic books until after college, and the only characters that really had a hold on me were Captain America and Daredevil. I was really homebrewed by the Frank Miller **Daredevil**, and **The Elektra Saga** and like a lot of other people, that really got me interested in comic books. The comics I had read or seen before were basically silly stuff, but then I read about this hero who was strong and successful not because of super powers but because of a liability—he was blind. The character really had an impact on me, so when I first tried to break into comics, all of my submissions were about Daredevil. This crossover is a dream come true.

How did the storyline come about?

Sven Svensgaska (freelance writer and former **Vampirella** scribe) and I became friends through Sven Larsen (of Accelerated Culture), and whenever we would hang out at shows or local watering holes, I'd be telling them "I'd love to do something with Daredevil." Eventually we just decided to go ahead and do it. Sven played a pivotal role in it too, he got the deal done. We met with Ralph Macchio at Marvel, and he was one of the few editors that was very cordial to me when I was first trying to get into comics. So having him involved was great.

Despite the scoop—how will Shi and Daredevil actually meet?

Bill: It's a two part story, both out by Christmas, with one part from Marvel and one from Crusade. Marvel's part is written by Chris Golden and Tom, and penciled by Tassil Igle, who did **Tomoe/Witchblade**. Ralph Macchio is the editor. On the Crusade end it's Peter Johnson and myself writing it, and me penciling it. Part one is called "Blind Faith," and part two is titled "Honor Thy Father." I don't want to give away too much but it's about the rise of Marvel's sinister ninja organization, trying to recruit Arnold as their ultimate weapon.

How does Daredevil just happen to live in the same universe as the Crusade adventure?

Bill: Shi and Daredevil live in New York City. It begins at a trial of one of the characters, and Matt Murdock is the defense attorney.

How will this be reflected in *Shi* continuity?

Absolutely. We could've just written a regular crossover that has nothing to do with the Crusade universe's continuity, but Daredevil is so dear to my heart that ten years from now when someone says "how did this happen to this Crusade character," I want to be able to say I did a crossover with Marvel and I got to draw Daredevil!" There's a definite turning point in the lives of my characters. The crossover actually sets up the introduction of a new character for us. Beyond that, we also bring in Shi's mother and explore whether or not she's Daredevil's mother, and we see the return from Japan. The story deals with fate and the power of persuasion, a bit of mysticism, as well as plenty of action. The story was actually one I'd written for Daredevil a long time ago when I was sending in my submissions and such.

Speaking of Scott Braden's *Untold Tales!* How did the original story come about?

Bill: I was originally trying to recruit Psylocke, from the X-Men, but we tweaked

it here and there, and Chris and Tom and the others came in and really made the story completely their own. The story took on a whole new dimension in the classic vein of the Miller **Daredevil** stories.

It sounds like you're bouncing off the walls with this one.

I'm pumped man! This is a story that can be published in trade paperback form, something that people will talk about for a long time. I've been approached by a lot of companies to do crossovers, and we could've done this with bigger characters than Daredevil, for bigger sales, but these two characters are made for each other. It's the best work I've ever done and we're all very excited about it.

You mentioned the Miller *Daredevil*. Are you trying to recapture a particular era of the character in this story?

There's so much that was unfinished from the early '80s, so I would say we're using that same character, Frank's **Daredevil**. We are s incorporating current continuity, like the law firm he works for now, but it also gives me a chance to put my own spin on Daredevil while staying true to the character. To me, he's like a gargoyle—people don't know if he's real or if he's just a legend. I'm going to ad a bit more mystery to him. I don't think Daredevil fans will be disappointed and the classic fans will be pleasantly surprised. This isn't one of those crossovers where the two characters meet, beat each other up over a misunderstanding, then go out and save the world; this is not like that at all.

With all the fun you had on this project, would you be interested in other crossovers?

I don't know if I could ever do a crossover with the other characters I would like to use. I mean, I love Superman, but Superman woul just grab Ana by the hair and throw her into space and let her suffocate.

Although he wouldn't do that—that's not a Superman thing to do.

Of course not. Ana would have to have a boxing match with Lois Lane over him or something, and he's a married man! But seriously I'm so busy right now I don't think I could ever work at someplace like Marvel, but I do hope I get to work with Daredevil again, if Ralph lets me. I'd be more than happy to do it.

Stepping back for a moment, part of the popularity of *Shi* is your own distinctive st of art. Who influences you artistically?

Not too many comic book artists, because like I said I never read comics until after c lege. Japanese wood block prints are a huge influence on me, and you can see tha you look at Frank Miller's work too, the use of line and black and white space. I'm also really influenced by fashion illustrators of the '70s and '80s like Patrick Nagle. like his clean lines and composition.

You've mentioned in the past that *Shi* began as a film script, and that must influ ence your approach as well.

You're definitely a director when you're drawing and writing, and that can be challenging. My story-telling has improved by leaps and bounds since the first issu and that's the whole thing—you have to try and surpass your last issue every time. That's why our books have grown since the beginning. You have to tackle each book like this is the last thing you're ever going to do.

Besides your art, don't you also challenge yourself with a gre deal of research for your stories?

Yes, and what gets so annoying is when people tell me never bothered to pick the book up. When I ask them "they tell me "well I'm not into that 'Bad Girl' stuff." Th hurts me, because I don't work 18 hours a day for ng, and Peter and I don't mull over books and go t seminars and watch films for nothing. There's so m research in **Shi**, and that's really about 75% of the work. It's great when someone like Chris Claremo tells me that he loved the book. That makes it w while. But when you see people buy the book stick it in mylar because they think it's going be worth money, it's bittersweet because I'm glad they're buying it, but it's frustrating because we all pour everything we ha into it.

And the "Bad Girl" trend is pl ing itself out anyway.

You're still going to see **Sh Vampirella**, and **Lady**

Death. They're not going anywhere because they're done by people who care. I don't know too many people who work as hard as [illegible] do, for example. It's just frustrating that some boob coined the phrase "Bad Girl," and any book with a female lead character [illegible] read that way. It's tough because there's an established genre of female leads and it's about time. It shows us that more women are reading comics.

Do you have a substantial female following?

[illegible] 50% of our letters are from women. We've always had a strong female readership though, because Ana doesn't run around [illegible] not stockings blowing people away or anything like that, and that's what people expect with the "Bad Girl" label.

You're going to produce something of a much higher quality.

Exactly. I didn't rip pages up. I could draw an issue in two weeks—it won't be great, and if I was in it just to make money that's what I would do. My books are late primarily because of me. I want everything to be the best work I've ever done. Who knows, I might get [illegible] by a bus next week or something, and you want to do something that you're proud of. I'm not the only way to gain some type of stability in the market too—you've got to keep producing books that people are going to buy beyond the first issue. You want to retain those readers.

You do seriously do, because you're one of the most popular draws at conventions these days. Do you enjoy making [illegible] appearances meeting your fans?

I'm absolutely. Come on, those people changed my life, and when someone comes up to me and asks for my autograph I can't be [illegible] I'm standing up to Reggie Jackson asking for his autograph, and then someone asks me! A lot of creators and self publishers [illegible] yourself. [**Ash**], Jimmy Palmiotti [**Ash**], Jeff Smith [**Bone**]—they'll all sit and take the time to meet these people. Jeff shakes every single person's hand, asks their name and draws a little sketch for them. That's what it's all about. I could still be bricklaying, or I could be a security guard or in law school feeling real happy [laughs]. I'm having the time of my life, sharing all these ideas in my head with other people. It's really weird when I'm in San Diego and there's somebody from China there! When fans come to see you from China or Hong Kong, there's nothing like it in the world.

And you guys have a really good time with fans too, from what I hear.

We were all singing "Hey Jude" in San Diego with the fans—it was great. In addition, Peter and I took about ten people out to lunch, and we had a real-ly nice time.

As we wrap up the past year in comics, where do you think the industry stands? What does 1997 hold for comic books and [illegible]?

1996 was a bad year for comics. There were some highlights, like the Superman wedding, and **Onslaught**, but everybody's trying to knock out of the comic book industry. We've had an article in **Wizard Magazine**, so we're trying to get people who don't nor-mally read comics to come in. It's a combined effort on the part of publishers and retailers. Now I'm having a good time—[illegible] things are on an upswing now. If we work togeth-er and tell the world know how great comic books are, [illegible] thing we can't do.

As I've said a-cade, in 1996 we kept a low profile, but this year we're going to bust open. I've been calling retailers [illegible] agitating for our books being late, because I feel like we've let them down, but now we're on a good schedule. And we've shipped eight color books in the last eight weeks so we're on a roll. We have things like **Manga Shi 2000** coming up, **Heaven and Earth**, our big **Unitus** project with Jim Lee that's going to be enormous. There's even a film adaptation of **Witchblade** on the horizon. The time is right to do it.

With projects like the *Shi/Daredevil* crossover, do you see yourself finally having the chance to do the things you wanted to do in [illegible] that your popularity has grown?

Yeah. When I first decided to break into comics, I thought "how can I get [illegible] to self-publish this, should I work for another company first?" That's when I started sending submissions to the big guys, and lucky for me they only wanted me [laughs]. Most guys start off working for Marvel or DC and branch off into their own projects. I want the other way. I'm the luckiest guy in the world, I attribute everything to that. I can't complain about [illegible]

IN 1997, THE YEAR OF THE CROSSOVER PT. 2, COMIC BOOK READERS WILL WITNESS SOME OF THEIR FAVORITE CHARACTERS AND CREATORS JOINING FORCES FOR THE FIRST TIME. WITH SO MUCH COMIC HISTORY BEING MADE, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO DECIDE WHERE TO LOOK FIRST FOR ACTION AND EXCITEMENT. BUT IF THE LOGIC BEHIND ONE PARTICULAR CROSSOVER PAIRING IS ANY INDICATION, THE ASH/AZRAEL PROJECT SPEARHEADED BY JOE QUESADA AND JIMMY PALMIOTTI WILL BE ONE TO WATCH. THIS ONE-SHOT, 48-PAGE PRESTIGE FORMAT BOOK SCHEDULED FOR MARCH, WILL BRING TOGETHER TWO CHARACTERS WHO NOT ONLY SHARE AN ARTIST, BUT THE SAME AFFINITY FOR FIRE. FAN BRAVED THE HEAT TO GET THE SCOOP FROM QUESADA HIMSELF, THOUGH OUR INTREPID INTERVIEWER SEEMED TO HAVE SOMETHING ELSE ON HIS MIND AS WELL...

BURNING BOWELS

Ash and Azrael FAN the Flames

THE HOUSE

by Arnold T. Blumberg

PALMIOTTI

FAN: I'm going to see a preview of *Star Trek: First Contact* tonight!
Joe Quesada: What?

Um...Nothing. Let's talk about the *Ash/Azrael* crossover.
OK. What you have to look forward to is, without a doubt, the best of all the crossovers. I guarantee it.

Good selling point.
This crossover was based on complete and total logic. Jimmy Palmiotti and myself created Ash, Denny O'Neill created Azrael, and I had a hankering for drawing Azrael and Batman again. Since Azrael and Ash are both fire-based characters, it was a natural thing.

(While playing with a couple of Borg action figures) How did the project come about?
It started with a phone conversation with [DC Editor] Archie Goodwin. We were catching up, and I said if there was ever an opportunity for Ash and Azrael to meet, and possibly even get Batman involved, I'd drop whatever I was doing just to do it.

This is your first time back on Azrael since the Borg War of 2366.
The what?

I mean, uh, since you left the title.
Absolutely, and another bonus was coming back to DC. Working for DC remains one of the most pleasant experiences I've ever had in the comic book industry. The only other thing that would've been cooler is if we'd thrown the Ray in there too. But maybe some where down the line...

So what's the story going to be?
Well, we've been discussing this for quite a while, making sure that the team behind it was the best quality, and I told Denny I didn't want to do a story where they meet, fight, and then become friends. So they're friends from the onset. The book actually opens up with a big fire!

What? Aren't the fire suppression systems working? I'd better get Geordi on that right away.
Who?

Uh, well, don't worry, I'll take care of it. Anyway, will this crossover involve some sort of temporal rift or spatial distortion?
No, there's no time pot tal or anything like that. We start in Gotham City, get a little Batman in there, and then Azrael come to New York to meet up with Ash. He's actually sent by Batman to clear his name in Batman's eyes. Firefly and Oracle are in the book, and we created a new villain to antagonize our heroes.

This crossover arrives right in the midst of a wave of similar projects. Why do you think there's so much 'crossover-mania' these days?
I think it has to do with economics. Eve the bigger companies are realizing the should expand their readership. But it also has to do with people finally sayin 'let's get back to having fun.' There's nothing to lose here, and readers finall get what they've been asking for all thi time. The first set of Amalgam books, f example, were so much fun!

Yeah, why can't they do that all year?
It's almost like they were able to loosen up for a second, and not take it too se ously. I thought they were some of the most brilliant books of 1996.

Well, as we say good-bye to 1996, ju what do we have to look forward to from Event in 1997?

We're committed to getting Ash out monthly. We have a plan that involves Humberto Ramos, Mark Waid, and Brian Augustyn. And this isn't me abandoning my character. While Humberto is working ahead on Ash and getting momentum going, I'll be working as well, with a story arc by James Robinson. So there will be Ash out on a monthly basis, and Humberto is kicking it off for us, allowing me the time to finally get some books in the bag.

It sounds like Event is boldly going where it's never gone before...schedule-wise, that is. You also have a lot of big players in the industry lined up to help you.

Whatever you want to call them, I think the most important thing is that if you roll the dice with these guys, you generally roll sevens 90% of the time in terms of story. In terms of respect, you roll sevens 100% of the time.

Looks up from the tricorder he's fiddling with) Mm-hmm, sounds like a warp field equation.

I don't.

(Closing tricorder) Nothing, forget it. When will we see these issues of *Ash*?

Mark, Brian, and Humberto's first issue of Ash will probably be in May or June. Mark and Brian will also be working on another ongoing series for us, Painkiller Jane, drawn by Rick Leonardi. Before that comes out, though, we have a Painkiller Jane/Darkness crossover, a one-shot written by Garth Ennis and drawn by Amanda Conner. So you see again we shoot for the top.

Well sure, it's always best to target the bridge area for maximum effect.

I'm not following...

What I mean is, you're sticking with just two monthly books?

Yes, we're not expanding to a thousand titles. Our aspirations are not to be Marvel or DC, we want to keep it small and manageable. It's the same sort of goals Valiant started with, and when it was manageable it was good. When it became unmanageable, it lost its charm.

Right, it mushroomed out of control, like a warp core explosion.

Uh . Right. There's only so many good creators out there, so there's only so many good books you can put out.

Why do you think all these talented people are drawn to work with Event and *Ash*?

I think the draw has always been there. We've always had good relationships with all of these creators, it was just a matter of working with everybody's schedule. A year ago, we wouldn't have been ready, but now things have started to gel. We've made a lot of mistakes at Event, and I've been the most guilty party in terms of lateness. When we first started, we solicited for our company before the books were done. That was a big mistake, and the people who end up getting hurt are the retailers and fans. I'm tired of blowing my commitment to all of them, so I'm stepping up to the plate and saying, 'I'm taking the time to put some books in the bag, but I'll be back. In the meantime, here's somebody who's really friggin' good to draw the book.' Plus the fact that me and Humberto have a standing bet—but we'll let the fans decide. Humberto swears that he draws Ash better than I do, so we have a little bit of a grudge match going. I've already seen how he draws Ash, and I've got my work cut out for me.

Sounds like you'll be in the trenches for a while.

You'll still hear from me, mostly with covers for Ash and editorials, so I'm not disappearing by any stretch of the imagination. The result is that next year, people will see two things they've never seen before. One, they're going to see Ash monthly. Second, by the end of the year, they're going to see me coming out monthly. Now that probably means the end of Western civilization as we know it, so just hold onto your hats. It's going to be really crazy

Any desire to try other projects along the lines of *Ash/Azrael* with the big boys?

In terms of working with DC or Marvel, it has to have a certain appeal. The Ash/Azrael thing was a natural and not just a paycheck. I didn't knock on Marvel's door asking for an Ash/X-Men crossover.

Oh, that's something we need.

I have no interest in it. It would be a huge paycheck but that's not what we're about. We want what's going to read and look the best, and what's going to work the best for the characters. Besides, I don't think DC would've agreed to this if it wasn't the perfect character match-up

Besides which, it seems like many creators are rededicating themselves, as you are, to the utmost quality in their work.

I can't speak for anybody else, but at Event, we've always been true to the fans when we guarantee that no book we put out will be of substandard quality. Even our new, creator-owned

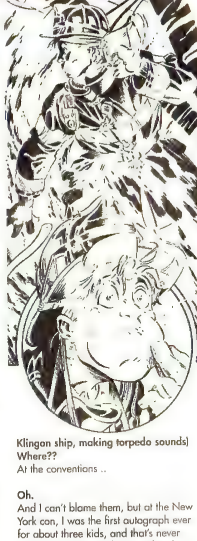
title that's coming out, Dave Ross' **Thrax**, is a magnificent book, and we hope people will pick it up and give it a shot. We always stay true to that commitment.

That's an admirable notion.
In the recent past, people have been late on books, which is a constant industry problem, especially for the smaller guys, or they've been putting out schlock, for lack of a better...well actually, I have a better word, but you know what I mean. We've never really stooped to the latter as far as I'm concerned, but we have been late, and I think it's a case of the industry going through an evolutionary pattern. During the glut, there were a lot of people who really had no right to be drawing comics. Ten years ago they would've still been showing their portfolios around, so the industry is sort of digesting and getting rid of what it doesn't need, and there were a lot of books that should never have been printed.

Now we're weeding out the chaff.
Exactly, and I think it's something that will inevitably make the industry stronger. I think all the publishers are realizing this is a natural progression, and the guys that are left are hopefully the ones who always do good work. Guys like Simonson, Chaykin—they'll never want for work, and there's a reason why they've been around all these years. They're still great.

Let's alter course for a moment and come about on a bearing of...um, sorry. I've had some experience with conventions over the years (shining up his communicator pin), but what was your impression of the convention circuit this year?
It's always enjoyable, but this was a rough year. Because of the political conventions and the Olympics, every con got slammed together within a week or two around the 4th of July. I was concerned too because I didn't see kids at the cons up until New York. That was the brightest spot at that convention, the fact that there were little kids again. That was a really good sign to me, and it was a major concern. I talked to a bunch of people at the beginning of the year, and we were all wondering 'where are the kids?' Everybody is sixteen or over, checking out all the half-naked spokesmodels.

(Looks up from a model of the Enterprise that he's flying toward a



Klingon ship, making torpedo sounds) Where??
At the conventions ..

Oh.
And I can't blame them, but at the New York con, I was the first autograph ever for about three kids, and that's never happened to me. At the Event booth, I was telling our employees that any kid they see on line who looks to be about seven or younger can cut the line, and they each get a free book. These kids are the future of our industry, so we have to plant the seeds again and get it growing.

Is that an influence on what you choose to portray in your comics?
Absolutely, and especially with **Ash**, we have a certain set of guidelines that we adhere to, sort of our own Event Comics Code for **Ash**.

Ahh, regulations, excellent. My favorite is the Prime Directive.
What?

Ummmm... So...no half-naked spokesmodels for you?
Not in **Ash**, but maybe at my house later. But that's beside the point. Our **Ash** universe books are a little more family-oriented. With a fireman superhero, there's a certain amount of responsibility I need and want to take. The shame about the industry today is that aside from **Superman**, **Batman**, and **Spider-Man**, there really haven't been any iconic characters created in years. As wonderful and successful a book as **Spawn** is, the mothers of America will never embrace that character, and I think Todd [McFarlane] knows it. With **Ash** and our deal with Spielberg's Dreamworks company to adapt the character to film, we have a good chance to turn it into something that will hopefully last longer than I do.

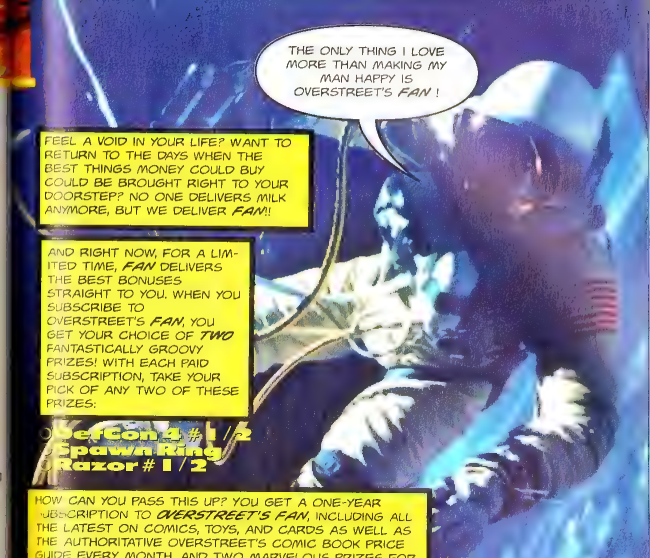
Yes, something that lives long and prospers. Do you think 1997 will see some positive changes for the comic book industry as a whale?
I'd like to think things are turning around. There used to be a point where you could predict which books would sell and which books wouldn't sell. But this has been such a volatile year, I don't even want to hypothesize. I'm just wishing everybody well, and I hope it's a good year for all of us. We'll just see how it goes.

I agree, we should all relax and enjoy the infinite diversity of the industry, and the ways in which we combine to form meaning, and beauty. (Shows off his IDIC medallion and grins.)
Right...I think. We can't take ourselves seriously. It's comic books! It was always meant to be fun. It was fun when I was a kid, and it's still fun for me today. Even the tactile feel and smell of a brand new comic book, especially on cheesy newsprint, means something to you.

Ahh yes, just like the warm tingle of a transport cycle...
What is with you?

Thanks for your time, and good luck in the new year.
Thank you.

Peace and long life, Mr. Quesada. (Offers the Vulcan hand-salute and vanishes in a sparkling beam of energy.)



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the British and Scottish and Irish INVASION

JOSEPH P. RYBANDT, AND CHRISTOPHER WOODWARD

AS YOU CAN SEE FROM THE TITLE, NAMING THIS PIECE WAS NOT EASY. THE SIMPLE TERM OF "BRITISH INVASION" DOES INJUSTICE TO THE NON-BRITISH CREATORS WE SPOKE TO. IN ESSENCE, THE BRITISH INVASION WAS STARTED BY ALAN MOORE, HIMSELF BRITISH. AS THE MOVEMENT PROGRESSED TO THE CURRENT DAY, ALL MANNER OF WRITERS FROM "ACROSS THE POND" ENTERED INTO THE WORLD OF MAINSTREAM AMERICAN COMICS. WRITERS LIKE ALAN MOORE, NEIL GAIMAN, GRANT MORRISON, JAMES ROBINSON, PETER MILLIGAN, GARTH ENNIS, WARREN ELLIS, MARK MILLAR, AND JAMIE DELANO ALL BROUGHT THEIR UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE AND TURNED COMICS INTO A VIABLE LITERARY MEDIUM. AS THE POPULARITY OF THIS UNIQUE VIEW CONTINUES TO GROW (JUST LOOK AT THE SUCCESS OF SANDMAN AND PREACHER TO NAME A FEW), WE TOOK THE TIME, WITH THE HELP OF FAN'S BRITISH LIAISON JOEL MEADOWS (EDITOR OF TRIPWIRE), TO GO TO THE SOURCE...TO THE CREATORS AND WRITERS. FROM SCOTLAND TO IRELAND TO MOTHERLAND ENGLAND...THIS IS THE STORY.

2000 AD was the comic that launched the careers of many of today's most popular British comic book writers. Most Americans, though, have never even heard of **2000 AD**, much less read an issue. **FAN** felt it was our duty to provide you with this, our brief introduction.

Before *Robocop*, *Mad Max*, and *The Terminator*, there was **2000 AD**. Started in 1977 by British competitions writer Kelvin Gosnell and girl's story scripter Pat Mills, **2000 AD**'s agenda was radically different from anything that came before.

2000 AD grew out of the British fascination, in the fifties and sixties, with science fiction and the future. It's precursor was Dan Dare, a fifties strip character whose future was sleek and streamlined. **2000 AD** was a reaction to that: rather than clean and bold, The Mega-City of Judge Dredd, the book's main character, was dirty, grimy and poverty-ridden with an atmosphere borrowed from the pulps.

As co-founder Mills explains, "I didn't want to follow in the same old house-style. **2000 AD** was not a vertical progression from previous comics, more a retreat into a darker world, where you could get away with anything."

Almost every big British comic creator of the last thirteen years has cut their teeth on **2000 AD**. Everyone from Brian Bolland to Steve Yeowell and back has had their start on this revolutionary weekly title. With its stories of a violent dystopian future ruled by a fascistic police force, the book presented a picture of things to come that was both brutal and groundbreaking. There was nothing else around at the time quite like it.

2000 AD was the perfect training ground for British artists and writers who didn't feel ready to pitch to the US compa-

nies. Zenith artist and Invisibles illustrator Steve Yeowell explains, "At the time, it seemed like a logical career progression. When I started, it didn't occur to me to send samples or apply to the Americans directly. You started at **2000 AD**, and seemed to be that Americans took notice of you when you appeared there."

"It attracted so many future superstars because it was the only place open for them to sell their work," explains early **2000 AD** mainstay and current Bat-writer Alan Grant. "There wasn't anywhere else to work for. Unfortunately, in recent years it's lost its influence a little. I think the reason for that is, when **2000 AD** started, many of the stories were culture-driven whereas most of the stories in today's **2000 AD** have no root whatsoever in what's happening in today's world. They're what you might call incestuous. Having said that, there are still strong strips running today."

It's because of this strong work that **2000 AD** has even had an effect on American comics. As veteran Judge Dredd artist Brian Bolland points out, "The only really noticeable influence it seems to have had on other things has been that, in America comic characters carry big guns. Before **2000 AD** came along, superheroes didn't carry guns. They've become more in the vein of something like *The Terminator*, whereas before 1977 it was more of a straightforward superhero situation."

2000 AD has also been a springboard for the more eclectic and surreal creators currently working in US comics: Grant Morrison and Steve Yeowell's Zenith was like Captain Britain through a twisted mirror, while Pete Milligan's ABC Warriors took a unique look at the concept of the team story. Even Garth Ennis got his start in **2000 AD** spin-off Crisis, in the satirical True Faith, which dealt with Catholicism and Britain's disenchanted youth. The book's most popular creation, Judge Dredd, has appeared in a number of places: in comics as a partner to Batman, in magazines like London's weekly listing publications Time Out and What's On, and, of course, in 1995's big budget Sylvester Stallone film.

In a way, **2000 AD** had come full circle with t

release of *Judge Dredd* the movie. One of 2000 AD's greatest influences. It could be argued, was the western: one man in a frontier town holding back the forces of chaos and anarchy. Unfortunately, by the time the film actually appeared, the public had been exposed to films like *The Terminator*, *Terminator 2*, *Robocop* and *Mad Max*, and *Dredd* was perceived as a weak copy of these films. This was the ultimate irony as, if it wasn't for 2000 AD and Judge Dredd, it's likely that none of those films would have been conceived.

Alan Grant, one of Dredd's developing writers, explains it best, saying, "That's Dredd's main appeal...the fact that he's a fascist! No matter how bad he acted, the better the readers liked him. There was a conscious decision on our part not to develop Dredd's character. He started off as a fascist cop with a neat line in black humor and some throwaway lines."

Of course, 2000 AD has had its ups and downs over the years, but that's inevitable with an anthology. No matter, 2000 AD continues to innovate, as current strips like Alan Grant and Arthur Ranson's "Mazeworld," Garth Ennis' return to AD after a long break, "Time Flies," and paranoid science fiction thriller "Vector 13" all make the future look bright for Britain's longest-running weekly.

—JM

"When you've been marinating in your own black juices for a couple thousand years, there's a different tone, a different flavor to things."
Alan Moore

ALAN MOORE

Alan Moore is the man most cited by contemporary comic book writers as an influence on there own writing. Through his work on Watchmen and Swamp Thing in the eighties, he changed the way superheroes could be perceived, presenting them as flawed, human individuals caught in realistic existences. Now, he's doing what he likes—which just happens to be the opposite of dark, realistic superheroes and echoes the silliness found in many heroes of the sixties.

"I guess that I was influenced the most stylistically by Harvey Kurtzman and Will Eisner," Moore admits, recalling how his comic sensibility was formed. "Those two are right up there at the top. Those are the two main gods in my comic book writers'

pantheon. The stuff I grew up with was the Julie Schwartz era of DC Comics and the Stan Lee, Kirby/Ditko stuff at Marvel and all the other stuff during the 60s."

It was a British comic, however, that made Alan decide to get serious about comics. "I think the main thing that gave me the idea that I could write stories for comics that would interest me was the work that was appearing from Pat Mills and John Wagner in 2000 AD. When it was in its early heyday, you had people like Brian Bolland doing Judge Dredd. Most of the better stories, with a couple of exceptions, seemed to be written either by John Wagner or Pat Mills, or under one of their many aliases. And there was something in them that said that these stories were being written by grown-up people who had a high degree of intelligence and had a high level irony and humor, which attracted me, and I began to think that maybe there was some possible slot for me within the more fruitful kind of ground that comics seemed to be turning into."

Moore admits that it's become hard of late to really identify exactly what separates American and British comic work. "The waters of that particular question have become more murky recently," he says. "But if there is some clear feature that separates British comic book writing from American, especially at that time, it might well be the sense of irony, the kind of cynicism that really only comes from being in an empire that is well into its decline. America is headed towards its decline. Give it another few years, and you'll have that deep-seeded pessimism of the soul. It's sort of a post-empire state that brings this strange, wry melancholia to some of the British work. It has something to do with how the history of a place defines the consciousness of its inhabitants."

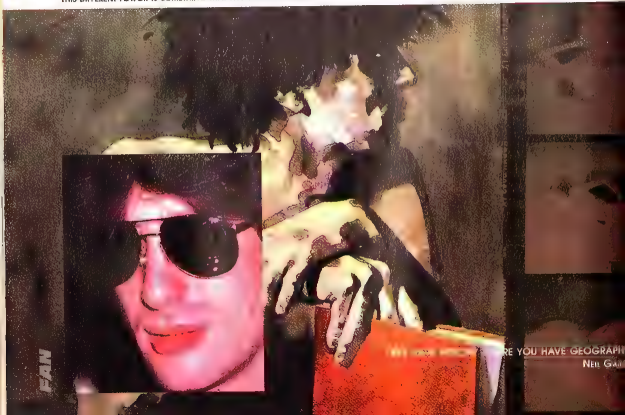
Moore pauses and then illustrates his point with, "In the town that I live in, there are buildings that are a thousand years old. In America it's a completely different dynamic. The difference between Britain and America was once described to me as, in Britain, a hundred miles is a long way, and in America, a hundred years is a long time. When you've been marinating in your own black juices for a couple thousand years, there's a different tone, a different flavor to things."

This different flavor is something that Moore was able to bring with him when he began on DC's Swamp Thing more than a decade ago. Once offered the job, it wasn't something he had to think long about. He recalls, "The opportunities that were presented when I was offered Swamp Thing were really stunning. In Britain, the most that you could hope for was a black and white strip with five pages a week, something like that. Whereas in America, you had the opportunity to write things that seemed of incredibly sprawling length. You could do a story in 24 pages and it would be printed in color! I remember putting some really serious thought into how to revise the story structures I'd been doing because they'd been devised to break down into 5 or 6 page episodes."

There was, of course, one other reason why Moore found writing American comics so appealing. "I grew up reading American comics," he explains. "We had very many great British comics at the time, but American comics were something different. They showed me a world that was already fantasy before the superheroes turned up. New York City was a science fiction landscape to me before you even had Superman leaping over the tall buildings. It's a thing where, when I was offered the chance to work at DC, all of the sudden there was the chance to tap back into these comic reading experiences which had been very formative for me."

Moore remembers very little recognition for most writers during those days. But, as he explains, that wasn't what he was interested in. "When I entered the field," Moore recalls, "certainly in this country, there was no job less glamorous than comic book writer. That wasn't what I got into the field for, though. It was purely because I wanted to write comics. It was only in the kind of explosion that followed that, when it got slightly tarnished for me because it became about other things than writing comics. It became about having a certain position in the industry or reputation, image, things like that. It was these things that made me take a more reclusive position in the industry. In fact, the industry itself, I have no interest in. I suppose that might be the sort of position of an embittered, cranky, old guy, but...."

—C



NEIL GAIMAN

"It was something I'd wanted to do since I was old enough to know that there were things I wanted to do when I grew up," says Neil Gaiman about his desire to write comic books. But even then, he admits, it wasn't just any old comics, it was the comic books from the U.S. that enthralled him at an early age. "It was what I told our school's careers adviser I wanted to do when I was fifteen ("I want to write American comics") which did not go down at all well."

It wasn't long before Gaiman got his wish. "In early 1987," he recalls, "Dave McKean and I went to the hotel that (DC editors) Karen Berger and Dick Giordano were staying in and showed them our stuff, and then walked out with a commission to do Black Orchid."

Black Orchid was received as a burst of fresh air by the American comic industry. As to whether this burst of fresh air was owed somewhat to the fact that Gaiman and McKean were British, Gaiman is hesitant to say. "I think there is probably a peculiarly British sensibility," he explains, "which comes partly from being a satellite nation to America (we get your TV, your magazines, your movies and your comics) which allows us to speak something similar to your language, and partly from living in a much smaller, older place: we have history where you have geography."

Gaiman's influences cover a lot of geography themselves, running the gamut from American music to British mystery writers. He admits, "I've got many. Chip Delany, R. A. Lafferty, Roger Zelazny, James Branch Cabell, G. K. Chesterton, The Velvet Underground, Peter Greenaway, Michael Moorcock, Dave McKean, Richmal Crompton, 'Do Not Adjust Your Set,' Fritz Leiber, Tori Amos...." Gaiman trails off and then admits there are too many to even list at this point in his life.

It's hard not to notice that there aren't a tremendous number of comic influences among the names on Gaiman's list, a fact which he's quick to remedy, adding that he still loves the medium. He explains, "I really admire the work of Alan Moore, Frank Miller, Dave Sim, Eddie Campbell, Chester Brown, Los Bros. Hernandez, Winsor McCay, Will Eisner.... Of course, the list of comic writers whose work I enjoy, rather than admire, would be much longer."

As for this past year's ending of Sandman, Gaiman says, "I was mainly puzzled that, when Sandman was done, the analyses and articles on it were coming not from the comics press (from whom I expected it) but from academe—from the universities and colleges, from the professors and the doctoral theses."

Gaiman is quick to note, however, that this has nothing to do with his recent non-involvement in comics. "Of course I don't feel unappreciated in either the industry or the art form," he says. "It would be very hard to feel unappreciated in an environment that has given me an embarrassing number of awards and honors, paid my rent, and treated me with love and respect for almost a decade."

—CW

JAMIE DELANO

With Hellblazer and other projects, Jamie Delano's taken us into the dark places we wouldn't usually go ourselves. Now with Paradox Press' 20/20 Visions and Bad Blood, as well as Acclaim Comics' Shadowman, Delano continues taking readers on journeys filled with menace and the macabre.

"What's the appeal of British writers?" Delano laughs, "I don't really know. I've thought about this several times over the years, and I still find it surprising. I think it's probably

because us Brits, as kids, didn't have that traditional involvement in superhero comics, therefore, we didn't have that sort of template. A lot of comic writers grew up with comics and moved to comics creation. It was sort of a club you joined. But British writers didn't have that sort of involvement with superhero comics in England. What comics we had were more likely to be war hero comics. So I guess maybe it's something to do with not having the preconception of what a comic was going to be when we actually sat down to write some of them.

"It was almost as if what we did was fresher and a little different or something. I don't think we're more literate or imaginative than American writers. Maybe it has something to do with atmosphere and tone. I think as writers we're a little bit darker and pessimistic. As to why there was suddenly a Brit in New York writing a DC comic is because we were made more welcome by DC than any comic company in England. In the early eighties, Alan Moore was sort of the first one writing British comics to be picked up by DC and off it went. After seeing a bit of what Alan was doing and the response he was getting, DC came and asked us to work for them. One way or another, I was lucky enough to write Hellblazer and presumably made a good enough job of it to be asked to do other stuff."

One of the few British writers who didn't cut his teeth at 2000 AD, Delano started his comics career writing for Marvel UK. "When Marvel went looking for a writer for Captain Britain, I got the job. I also wrote Dr. Who stories for Marvel, as well as bits and pieces for 2000 AD, but it was never full-time work. I was taxi driving part time and s*** like that to keep body and soul together. Then along came DC with Hellblazer, and I thought it might last 12 months or something if I was lucky. But it didn't, it lasted a lot longer.

"You know, I used to be a little bit dismissive of comics, being brought up reading books. But once I started writing them, that started to fall away, and I was right into comics as a creative medium. It doesn't mean I don't want to do other stuff as well, but comics give you the chance to get good ideas out rather quickly. Plus, you can make a living at it, which is pretty bloody hard to do as a writer, generally speaking. So that's a big consideration. I also think it's an excellent training ground as well. It's an art in its own right, but it also develops visual storytelling skills, which has got to be good for television or movie stuff."

Having helped spearhead the British Invasion of comics with the likes of Alan Moore and Grant Morrison, and in doing so bringing a whole new energy to the medium, Delano is hesitantly hopeful about comics future. "It seems to be true what they say about post-literate generations. I think there are less and less writers about because there's less and less readers about. It sounds like a horrible reactionary thing to say, but I'm afraid it's probably true. I only hope that we inspire somebody to come along and be as radical as we hopefully were ten years ago."

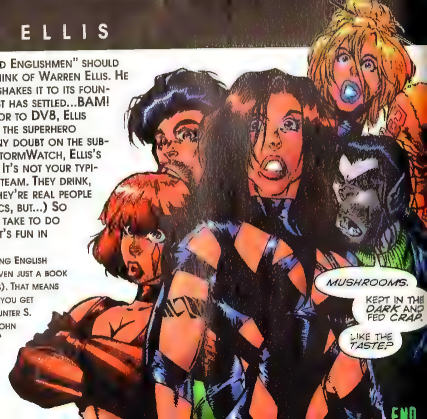
—SI

WARREN ELLIS

The phrase "Mad dogs and Englishmen" should come to mind when you think of Warren Ellis. He tackles the mundane and shakes it to its foundations. And after the dust has settled...BAM! he does it again. From Thor to DV8, Ellis continues to deconstruct the superhero mythology. If you have any doubt on the subject, just take a look at StormWatch, Ellis's monthly title from Image. It's not your typical U.N. based superhero team. They drink, smoke, have sex, curse...they're real people (I know they're just comics, but...) So what kind of mind does it take to do such things? Step inside, it's fun in there.

Living in England meant reading English comics, American reprints or even just a book (that's a comic without pictures). That means when you ask about influences, you get a list of authors from Ellis. "Hunter S. Thompson. Derrick Raymond. John Brenner. Whole files of people."

If you notice, it's been a long time since Hunter S. Thompson wrote an issue of the X-Men. But as stated before, there



REALLY ARE BRITISH COMICS. BUT DID 2000 AD, FOR EXAMPLE, COMPARE TO THOSE WACKY AMERICAN COMICS? "I LOOKED AT AMERICAN COMICS, BUT I DIDN'T REALLY PAY MUCH ATTENTION TO THEM WHEN I WAS A KID. YOU'VE GOT A BIG, BLUE SUPERMAN DOING NICE THINGS. AND THEN 2000 AD—THE FIRST ISSUE THAT I OPENED HAD THIS DAMN GREAT FULL-PAGE SPREAD OF A DINOSAUR OPENING ITS MOUTH TO SHOW YOU A GUT FULL OF CHEWED-UP COWBOY. SUPERMAN DIDN'T COMPARE REALLY."

SO WHAT IS ELLIS' BIG ATTRACTION OF THESE BRIGHTLY CLAD MEN AND WOMEN IN TIGHTS? "BECAUSE THEY PAY ME," LAUGHS WARREN. I LAUGH TOO, AND HE ADDS, "LET'S BE HONEST, THERE'S REALLY NOT MUCH OF A BRITISH PUBLISHING INDUSTRY. WHAT ATTRACTS ME TO SUPERHEROES IS THERE'S SO MUCH LEFT TO BE DONE WITH THEM. THEY ARE AN INTERESTING GENRE, A VERY AMERICAN GENRE. I LIKE TO PICK IT APART TO SEE HOW IT WORKS." HEY, LISTEN TO MISTER ELLIS KIDS, HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT.

ASIDE FROM THE WORKINGS OF STORMWATCH, ELLIS PUTS HIS BRITISH SPIN ON THE YOUTHFULLY AMERICAN DV8, OF WHICH HE HAS NOTHING BUT NICE THINGS TO SAY. "THEY'RE ALL JUST A BUNCH OF HORRIBLE, DYSFUNCTIONAL LITTLE BASTARDS." IT'S NICE THAT SUCH A TWISTED LITTLE COMIC IS ON THE STANDS THESE DAYS. AND WHAT KIND OF PERSON DOES IT TAKE TO WRITE SUCH UPLIFTING MORAL TALES? "I DON'T KNOW, I SAW *RIVER'S EDGE*, AND THAT WAS COMPLETELY NORMAL TO ME. SITTING THERE BY THE RIVER BANK WATCHING A CORPSE WASH UP." THANK YOU MR. ELLIS, VERY NORMAL, NOW PUT THE FORK DOWN.

AS YOU CAN TELL THIS ISN'T A DISNEY COMIC. "I THINK WITH DV8, THE TRICK IS JUST TO BE HONEST. THERE'S NARY A REDEEMING FEATURE BETWEEN THEM. SO I THOUGHT, 'OH FRIK IT, WE'LL JUST PLAY IT STRAIGHT.'"

—JD

JAMES ROBINSON

AS THE CURRENT WRITER OF STARMAN AND LEAVE IT TO CHANCE, MANY FANS CREDIT JAMES ROBINSON WITH LEADING THE CURRENT EFFORT TO BRING A SENSE OF CLASSICAL FUN INTO COMICS. HIS WORK IS SMART, INVENTIVE, AND NOSTALGIC, AS HIS HEROES RELY A LITTLE ON LUCK AND A LITTLE ON THEIR OWN DETERMINED BELIEF THAT WHAT THEY'RE DOING IS RIGHT. MANY PEOPLE MIGHT CALL THESE "CLASSICAL" IDEAS, SOMETHING WHICH ROBINSON DOESN'T CRINGE AT.

"I WOULD HAVE TO SAY, IN COMICS, MY BIGGEST INFLUENCES ARE ALAN MOORE, WHO WAS BECOMING A NAME WHEN I WAS A YOUNG MAN STILL EXPLORING THE IDEA OF WRITING COMICS AS OPPOSED TO MERELY READING THEM. AND ONE OF THE THINGS THAT HE BROUGHT TO COMICS WERE REFERENCE POINTS FROM OUTSIDE OF COMICS. MY BIG LOVES IN TERMS OF ENGLISH WRITING ARE CHARLES DICKENS AND ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON, AND I'M SURE IN SOME WAY THEY'VE INFLUENCED ME. BUT I'VE ALWAYS HAD MY EYE ON THE BIG LAND ACROSS THE POND, HENCE I'M LIVING IN AMERICA NOW. SO A LOT OF MY INTERESTS IN TERMS OF PROSE FICTION AND IN TERMS OF WRITERS WERE AMERICAN. FITZGERALD, FOR INSTANCE, IS ALSO SOMEONE I LOVE GREATLY."

Robinson readily admits that not only does he know these outside influences have affected the way he writes comics, but that he welcomes that influence. "A lot of that sort of not being afraid to bring in your influences from outside of comics, I think a lot of English writers, myself included, have been affected by that," he explains. "I know I have a lot of fun when I write the Shade character because I can kind of become quasi-Dickensian and have some fun there. A lot of the characters I grew up with are no longer around in the versions that I enjoyed. That's why I'm doing Starman. I'm creating a character from the ground up, and I can bring in supporting characters that I enjoy or have some sort of bizarre affection for from the corners of the DC Universe."

This may be one of the reasons why, despite Robinson's living in America, his style hasn't changed. "I would hope that my work has an individual stamp. I think that the idea of the British writer has become so commonplace that I don't know that me as a British writer stands out so differently from American writers. Hopefully I stand out as singular to me, as James Robinson. But if there are singularities, this sounds so pretentious, but I'm too busy writing to sit down and analyze what makes my work singular."

In assessing his own work, in fact, Robinson turns very humble. "Honestly," he begins, "at this point, I had hoped to have an impact on comics, but I'm beginning to realize I don't have any. I'm just someone who's trying to do good work. In terms of the broader fan-base, I really don't know if I have any or very much fan recognition at all. I know I have some people that follow my work. But I sometimes wonder if I really am doing an effective job, so it is something I wrestle with quite often."

Though Robinson may not be complementary of his own writing, he does have kind words for his compatriots. "Alan Moore obviously has his motors running, and Supreme is fresh exciting stuff that I'm enjoying greatly," he confesses. "And I've always followed Grant Morrison's work and enjoyed the humor and the irony in a lot of it. I think Mark Millar's a guy to watch, though the quirkiness of his work was a little lost on Swamp Thing. And everyone loves Garth and his violent, twisted visions, and I would have to agree with that."

Once Robinson brings up Grant Morrison and Garth Ennis, he also mentions a bit about the differences in their styles. Robinson sees it as a matter of geography, explaining, "There is an argument to say that Grant, Garth, and I actually come from three different countries. And I think that's reflected. I know there's certainly a hard-boiled, Northern Irish sensibility to Garth's work that's apparent. And I think that sort of black, ironic humor, and I mean that in a complementary way, that runs through Grant Morrison's work is something that Scottish writers of prose just have innately within them. I think that is one of Grant's great strengths as a comic writer."

—CW

Perhaps best-known for his work on the phenomenally successful Arkham Asylum, Grant has contributed his perspective to re-defining the way we think of superheroes. Whether it be the ultra-weird Doom Patrol or the ultra-hip Invisibles, Grant's done it all. As he now prepares to take on the Justice League of America, what better time to get his views...

As far as the timing goes, Grant is up there with Alan Moore for being one the first of the movement. "Alan and me actually started during the same time," he admits, "though I'm a bit younger than him. I came up in conditions that were actually similar to his. When he was able to do the American thing, it definitely opened the doors because it was successful, and then they came looking for the best of us."

As far as naming the movement, the Scottish Morrison comments, "I've never belonged to any movements, but if I can sneak into this one, I will. If you're going to call it anything

may as well be the British Invasion. Scotland and Ireland have had a lot of British invasions before, so I think we can put up with a new one."

The difference between American and British comic creators may boil down to influences. "A lot of my influences come from outside comics, which is probably one of the things common to most of British writers and artists," says Morrison. "It really depends on the work. A project like The Invisibles or Flex Mentallo, those books I think were inspired by playwrights and dramatists. It seems that the common denominator between all of us to do this work is that the principle influence of the thrust of what we do is apparently familiarization with things other than comics." Quite a different take than your average Marvel-zombie. But that statement is at the core difference between Grant and many others.

"For a long time," says Morrison, "American writers seemed to draw their influences entirely from the last month's comics. With the influence of the blood from overseas, that has changed. For awhile the stories were kind of eating themselves and there was no new blood coming in, there were no new ideas coming in, and it needed that transfusion. There's a lot more interesting stuff coming in from the American guys now, people like Mark Waid are doing stuff as good as anything British writers have done in the past."

In the past, actually, a great deal of British talent went to DC, only more recently spilling over into Marvel. Why DC? "I think that's probably the nostalgia element. It's a way of coming back to it and recalling some ideas to make them important again. In America, there's more of a distinction between the small press and the mainstream. I think it has more to do with snobbery, as you don't have a class system, so you've got to have something. In Britain, we've been under the class system for years, and I think what's happened is that people in Britain like Alan Moore, like most of us, are willing to do small press work as much as they're willing to do major mainstream graphic novels." As for Marvel and the X-Men, Morrison states, "The X-Men are just too confusing to me. People say they can't understand my comics, but I pick up the X-Men and I'm just baffled. I have no concept of who's who and what time-line they come from, nothing."

But with Britain still producing comics, why work for the Americans? Morrison answers, "Revenge? For the fact that America has colonized the rest of the world, this is a way of sneaking in the back door and saying 'boo.' It's also to insert ideas that Alan may have started that may not have been prevalent in comics. Again, those are ideas that come from other media and other fields. And just to get you back for giving us McDonalds and everything."

—JPR

MARK MILLAR

A relative newcomer to American comics, Mark Millar has gained critical acclaim for his phenomenal run on DC's Swamp Thing, as well as his and collaborator Grant Morrison's study of the modern hero with their Aztek, The Ultimate Man. Mild-mannered in demeanor while Herculean in approach, both Millar and his work are currently generating a buzz from fans and professionals alike. Paying it no mind, Millar just carries on with business as usual—creating fantastic stories. He's cool like that.

"I grew up reading stuff like Elliot S. Maggin and Curt Swan's Superman," Millar remembers, "I totally believe in truth, justice, and the American way because of these comics, you know? And the decency you find in Superman has inspired me throughout my whole life."

Those are brave words from a young writer who hails from Scotland ("The nicer piece of Britain") and whose first American work was following in the dark footsteps of one of the fathers of modern comics, Alan Moore. "Comics most impressed me when Alan Moore first came onto the scene. I was at an age when most people were leaving comics, and then he came along just in time and showed me that, 'Hey, comics can be good!'

"When I began writing Swamp Thing, it was daunting. It was humiliating and terrifying at the same time, because I knew Alan had really revolutionized comics with Swamp Thing, and it's almost like somebody saying, 'You know the Mona Lisa? Do paint a new version of it.' It's quite terrifying, you know? You can be the greatest writer in the world, but you'll always be compared unfavorably to Alan Moore. Luckily for me, almost ten years passed between his first issue and my first issue, and I think that was enough time that my work could be judged on its own merit."

Millar pauses for a second, as if in confession. "As much as I enjoyed Moore's stories though, I never read the older Swamp Thing stories as a kid. I instead read the superhero stuff. Unlike most of my contemporaries—most British guys grew up on 2000 AD—I'd read stories by Curt Swan and Carmine Infantino. I liked all of the American stuff, but my heart really belonged to DC. I've always loved Superman and Batman; the Justice League; all those classic characters. I remember reading all those great Justice League stories in the 70s. What's not to love?!! Later on, there was this second Golden Age of Comics in the early 80s—with Watchmen and Frank Miller's Daredevil and Dark Knight. All of this great stuff was coming out and it was virtually impossible to stop reading comics. I knew right then and there that I wanted to work in comics, because if the books could be that good, I wanted to be part of it."

Even though the majority of Millar's comic book reading included books from the States, he still finds his writing style differing from his American counterparts. "As a writer, you're the sum of all your parts, and you can only write what's in your head—and what's in everybody's head depends on where they are and what their life experiences are. With that said, I think us British have an unusual way of looking at things. We may be less idealistic, so we kind of look at things in a slightly creepier way. We've been taught to be cynical, I suppose, and to look unfavorably upon authority, maybe even more so than Americans. Having had these horrible right-wing governments over the years, we tend not to trust authority figures. So maybe we bring something else to superheroes that makes them a little bit quirkier than the American writers.

"Personally, though, I'm basically trying to write the same kind of comics that I want to read, and I think the fans tend to want to read them too. I think a lot of writers, American or otherwise, make the mistake of thinking about what the kids want and tend to formulize the entire thing. I think a lot of comics have no soul because the writers aren't writing the kind of comics that they want to read. That's not the case with Grant and myself, but that's where writers like us come in."

—SB

GARTH ENNIS

ONE OF THE MOST RECENT WRITERS TO BRING THE BRITISH INVASION BACK TO THE FOREFRONT, GARTH ENNIS HAS SHOCKED AND AMAZED WITH PREACHER. NOW HIGHLY IN DEMAND, FROM BOTH FANS AND FELLOW CREATORS, GARTH REPRESENTS THE NEW BREED.

GARTH GREW UP ON BRITISH COMICS, WITH NOT AN AMERICAN FUNNYBOOK TO BE SEEN. "THE ONLY ONE YOU WOULD'VE HEARD OF WOULD BE 2000 AD," HE ADMITS. "I REALLY DIDN'T LIKE THEM (AMERICAN COMICS). AFTER THE MORE SORT OF BRUTAL AND VIOLENT BRITISH COMICS, THE AMERICAN ONES DIDN'T SEEM TO MEAN MUCH TO ME. YOU WOULD HAVE JUDGE DREDD DEALING OPEN JUSTICE TO PEOPLE AND BLASTING THEM TO DEATH AT THE END OF THE STORY FOR THEIR CRIMES. BATMAN IN THE STORIES I LOOKED UP WOULD ALWAYS SORT OF HAUL PEOPLE OFF TO JAIL. THIS DIDN'T SEEM TO MEAN A GREAT DEAL TO ME. THERE WAS ALSO A SENSE EARLY ON THAT I GOT WHEN LOOKING AT AMERICAN COSTUMED SUPERHEROES THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING INHERENTLY SILLY ABOUT THEM WEARING THESE SKIN-TIGHT COSTUMES. UNTIL THIS DAY, I DO HAVE THIS SLIGHTLY HUMOROUS VIEW OF THEM. YOU KNOW, A BIG MAN RUNNING AROUND IN TIGHTS. IF YOU GET AN IDEA LIKE THAT AT AN EARLY AGE, YOU'LL NEVER SHAKE IT REALLY."

RATHER THEN TRUDGE ALONG IN RELATIVE OBSCURITY IN THE BRITISH MEDIUM, GARTH WENT FOR THE THROAT. "IT'S NOT SO MUCH AN AMERICAN AUDIENCE AS WORKING FOR THE AMERICAN COMIC INDUSTRY," HE SAYS, "BECAUSE THE BRITISH COMIC INDUSTRY IS PRETTY MUCH ON ITS LAST LEGS—CERTAINLY AS FAR AS THE WORK I DO IS CONCERNED. IT'S SORT OF BEEN PREYING ON ITSELF NOW THROUGH VERY BAD MANAGEMENT AND THROUGH A LOT OF EDITORIAL INCOMPETENCE, AND, IT HAS TO BE SAID, JUST A LOT OF SHEER BAD LUCK."

THE EXACT OPPOSITE, CONTRARY TO ALL NAY-SAYERS, IS THE CASE IN THE STATES. "I FIND THEM (DC) EXTREMELY PROFESSIONAL," SAYS ENNIS. "I GET EVERYTHING FROM THEM THAT I NEVER REALLY GOT WORKING FOR BRITISH COMICS. MOST OF ALL, I GET A FEELING THAT THE EDITORS GENUINELY CARE ABOUT WHAT THEY'RE DOING. THEY CARE ABOUT HAVING GOOD COMICS OUT THERE, AND I'M INVOLVED IN EVERY STAGE OF THE PROCESS. MY IDEAS FOR COVERS ARE LISTENED TO, IDEAS FOR PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL, I GET A SAY IN THE CHOICE O ARTIST FOR EACH PROJECT." AND OF COURSE, THERE'S THE MONEY, "DC PAYS WELL, SO DO MOST AMERICAN COMPANIES. BRITISH COMICS PAID WELL ON A BASIC PAGE-RATE BASIS, BUT YOU WERE NEVER GIVEN MUCH IN THE WAY OF A SHARE OF THE PROFITS; THERE WAS NO ROYALTY SCHEME. OWNERSHIP OF CHARACTERS WAS ALSO VERY DIFFICULT TO SWING AS WELL. GENERALLY, YOU'RE TALKING ABOU VASTLY IMPROVED WORKING CONDITIONS. AND FROM A CREATIVE POINT OF VIEW, THAT JUST MAKES YOU WANT TO DO YOUR BEST AT ALL TIMES."

BUT PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT DIFFERING ASPECT IS THE PREDOM INANT LACK OF CENSORSHIP IN THE STATES. "I'M ABLE TO DO A BOOK LIKE PREACHER AND NO ONE REALLY INTERFERES WITH US," ENNIS ADMITS. "YES, THERE IS CENSORSHIP, MORE AT THE LEVEL OF THE PUBLISHER THAN AT THE EDITORIAL LEVEL, BUT THAT'S ONE OF THE THINGS YOU ACCEPT. SO FAR, IT HASN'T AFFECTED ANY OF THE STORIES TO A DRASTIC EXTENT. I'D SAY THAT THERE WAS MORE CENSORSHIP WORKING IN BRITISH COMICS, EVEN WHEN I STARTED OUT. I HAD A TRADE PAPER BACK THAT WAS GONE FROM SALE BECAUSE OF COMPLAINTS, TRUE FAITH, WHICH IN FACT VERTIGO IS GOING TO BE RE-PUBLISHING NEXT YEAR."

PERHAPS THE BIGGEST DISTINCTION BETWEEN "US AND THEM" WOULD BE THE USE OF HUMOR IN THE WORK PRODUCED BY WRITERS LIKE GARTH. LET'S FACE IT, PREACHER IS HILARIOUS. "IT'S THAT SORT OF BLACK SENSE OF HUMOR TAKEN A STAGE FURTHER," EXPLAINS ENNIS. "EVER SINCE ALAN MOORE GOT INTO THE BUSINESS, I THINK A DARIC SENSE OF HUMOR HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED WITH A LOT OF THE BRITISH COMIC WRITERS AND PERHAPS MINE'S A LITTLE BIT THICKER AND A LITT BIT DARKER. BUT YOU SAY THAT KIND OF THING AND IT JUST INVITES SOMEONE LIKE GRANT TO DO SOMETHING MORE DISGUSTING IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE INVISIBLES, SO MAYBE I SHOULDN'T MAKE TOO MANY CLAIMS LIKE THAT EITHER."

—J

Following in the wave re-vamps, Milligan gained most of his fame by re-tooling Shade, a formerly non-descript Ditko creation. Since the end of Shade (where Chris Bachalo cut his comic-teeth by the way), Milligan has moved more into the mainstream with work for Marvel.

It seems that the beginning is a little blurry for Mr. Milligan. "They must have called me up when they used to come over here," he attempts to recall. "There would be these meetings where I would show my work to them, Karen Berger, Dick Giordano and other people, and there were other people who would be in the bar, fooling around on the floor. They'd eventually drag us from the bar into the viewing room and talk about the stuff we wanted to do. It was wholly easy." More magic in the comic industry.

From this discovery came Shade The Changing Man, one of the titles which helped create, and later established, the need for Vertigo. Milligan remembers, "They came to me and said, 'What do you want to write?' I thought, 'What do I want to write? I don't know anything about comics at all.' I referred back to Brendan McCarthy and he said, 'Shade could be a really good one to do.' I had my ideas about what I wanted to do in terms of the cultural icons of America. So I then looked at Shade, and it seemed to be a good vehicle for me to actually frame my ideas through. I like to explore the absurdity and perverseness of a character that's been established. It would have been much easier for me to create Shade anew. I could have called him a different name and it would have been exactly the same story that everyone else has read. But there was something perverse and difficult about taking on that character."

Again, as with Grant Morrison, the desire to get under America's skirt was one of the driving forces from Peter. "Being brought up in Britain, you're inundated with American culture and American comics as well," Milligan explains. "So there was that sense of your country really controlled our country. There was that sense of exploring the icons, exploring the stepping stones which made your country. I thought it was a bit like getting back at America." In that sense comes the main difference in attitude between an American and a Brit: "I think most people born in this country like American comics and superheroes, which is something we looked at and might be interested in, but talking to Americans, it was part and parcel of your f%$#ing life. It was integral to your upbringing. Therefore, it's much easier to take a backwards step and look at these things from a more dispassionate and perhaps a more radical view."

Switching gears from Vertigo work to mainstream Marvel, however, was a relatively easy transition for Peter. "I'd say 60% of my writing at the moment is non-comic writing. I could not write 100% Marvel Comics. That's not to denigrate Marvel Comics. But when I talk about my needs as a writer, to do things and talk about things in a certain way, it would mean I could not do that. I'd never done that kind of comic work before, they just kind of talked to me for a while, and now I'm doing a few things for them." And could that be Spawn waiting in the wings? "I've always wanted to write Spawn. I don't believe we've seen the full picture. I think we've only seen the public facade. I'd just like to see Spawn with the skirts pulled up and see what he's like beneath the kilt."

—JPR

FAN Staff Psychiatric

FAN'S 1997 CONFIDENTIAL

In the interests of better mental health, we asked the entire FAN staff to list their predictions for the coming year. Dr. Norman (myself) and Dr. Cathro conducted the following experiment to assess the psychiatric stability of the staff. We regret to conclude that scores were exceedingly low. So low that this staff is obviously in dire need of major counseling and intensive drug-therapy. Our results are as follows. Please do not be alarmed.

Benn Ray (Editorial)

- Top Cow will quit and rejoin Image a mere 3 times.
- Rob Liefeld will, in a moment of confusion, accidentally sue himself.
- Sin City will be optioned by Hollywood.
- Marvel will realize that it is physically impossible for something to be reborn, so in an attempt to clean up the confusion created by the Heroes Reborn line, they will launch Heroes Reincarnated with Todd McFarlane and Frank Miller each taking a half of the Marvel Universe.
- The average cover price for a comic will reach the $5.95 mark.
- The comic industry will be deluged with people doing comics just to get a movie option from Hollywood... oh wait, that has opened in '95-96.
- 1997: The Year of the Bat.
- Jim Shooter and Rob Liefeld will join forces to form Maximum Broad Press.
- After one of his grandchildren is caught reading **Preacher** and **Spawn**, Sen. Jesse Helms will target the comic industry and become the next Frederic Wertham.
- Bra sizes will shrink, crossovers will dwindle, variant covers will multiply, and ultra-violent stories will abound.

Scott Braden (Research)

- **FAN** staffer Joey "Boom-Boom" Rybandt is gonna git himself hitched (just know it).
- With their phenomenal success with the X-Files, Topps Comics will pursue the rights for **Kolchak, the Night-Stalker**.
- **FAN** guy Tash Woodward will still be very thin. What are you gonna do?
- Sweeping changes will rake the comic-book industry by storm!!!
- **FAN** Associate Editor Benn Ray will get his ugly mug in at least eight of the next twelve issues of **FAN**. He's got connections, you know.
- **Cable** will be the X-book to watch in the coming year. It's a feeling I got, okay?!!
- I'll get at least one bad haircut within the next year, forcing my friends and co-workers to berate me continually. God, do I love the attention.
- **FAN** Senior Graphic Designer Jeff Dillon will fail yet again at comic domination. (There's always the next year....)
- **FAN**'s resident Star Collector Arnold T. Blumberg will make yet another appearance on *Baywatch* as the man who broke Pamela Anderson's heart, but at the same time learns us all a valuable lesson about life. It'll be a very special *Baywatch*.
- Managing Editor Todd Hoffer will kill a fellow **FAN** staffer with his bare hands. (He's done it before, y'know!)

Evaluation #000106

PREDICTIONS

Arnold T. Blumberg (Production)

- *Doctor Who* will return once more to the small screen; perhaps to stay. The big-screen version featuring David Warner and Malcolm McDowell as two incarnations of the Doctor will soon follow.
- In a stunning development, **The Oxford English Dictionary**, in conjunction with **Webster's** and **American Heritage**, will change English language forever by confirming that W does in fact come before G.
- There will be love and romance a-plenty for a certain curly-coiffed FAN Production Manager. OK, this isn't a prediction, it's a desperate cry for help.
- In an episode of *Star Trek* airing in '97, a crewmember or crewmembers will travel in time and try to preserve history by stopping a lunatic from altering the future. I know, it's far-fetched—call me a rebel.
- Marvel will take the final step to giving up their interests in the publishing arena and focus on what they always wanted to do—make money off past glories. Wait, they already do that. Never mind.
- Dana and Gabrielle will realize their true love for each other as they walk hand-in-hand to the *Cinemax After Dark* time slot.
- A pregnant Lois Lane will be kidnapped and held captive by a mad businessman with a Halloween fetish who plans to pit her newborn against another woman's child. Thus begins the first crossover in comics history—Superbaby Vs. Spider-Chapter One—"If This Be Feeding Time?" or "Milk Is Another Name For Mayhem!".
- Within someone in a certain company will do a certain something that will have significant repercussions on a certain someone else in a similar or completely different field. And you can quote me on that one! I'm not afraid to commit to the hard-sell!
- After encountering an evil female double of Quinn last year, readers will eventually slide into a parallel dimension in which, at long last, they encounter a female Wade.
- And it will be that as the millennium draws to a close, the world will be ravaged by flood, famine, and wars pitting man against his brother. In the final days of the 20th century, as the Earth teeters on the brink of total destruction, one man will emerge from the rubble to lead the human race to a brighter future, a society founded on the principles of peace, love and equality for all. The world will rejoice in the dawning of a New Age of Man. And the man will be... the Star Collector." (Note: This is merely a translation of an obscure quatrain penned by Nostradamus centuries ago.)

Jeff Dillon (Graphitis)

- Comics will cease to be a viable art form and once again become a product for the masses.
- The Hulk will be the key for the Heroes Reborn to return the Marvel Universe.
- Superman will change his costume.
- They really will make new *Star Wars* movies.
- New comics printed on newsprint will be labeled "Retro" and cost $2.95, becoming instantly collectible and driving the price of "normal" comics into the stratosphere.
- Scratch-n-Sniff covers will be all the rage. Mmmm—nude variants.
- A live-action *Simpsons* movie.
- 1998.
- Monthly crossover books.

Jennifer Unglesbee (Customer Service)

- Jeff Dillon, graphic artist extraordinaire, will change his name to Grumpy and start wearing long, wool capes.
- The second **Poison Elves** trade paperback, **Traumatic Dogs**, will come out...eventually.
- Scientists will continue to find rocks, and I mean "life," on Mars. It's all part of my master plan.

PREDICTIONS

J. C. Vaughn (Marketing)

- Comic shops stop carrying pogs.
- **Detectives, Inc.** will re-emerge from comics limbo.
- Variants of popular titles continue to sell well; variants of others don't.
- Acclaim Comics publishes the comic book adaptation of Hillary Clinton's **It Takes A Village To Raise A Child**. It proves to be Acclaim's first bomb after huge hits with **X-O Manowar**, **Shadowman**, **Eternal Warriors** and the sleeper hit, **Ninjak**.
- Shoot-Down-All-Opposing-Ideas continues to be the dominant theory behind **FAN** staff meetings.
- Marvel Characters, Inc. becomes Marvel Character, Inc. after selling every character except Speedball to Rupert Murdoch.
- Marvel launches 15 titles featuring Speedball and supporting cast.
- Marvel hires a bunch of depressed British writers to create the Agoraphobic imprint, which features lots of stories that don't make much sense. It must be "art."
- Heroes World, named "Distributor of the Year" in Marvel Press Release.
- **Sin City** becomes an ABC sitcom with John Goodman as Marv.
- **X-O Manowar** penciller Sean Chen will continue to gain popularity as a hot artist.
- Beau Smith will say something in his column that nicks off one group of people and delights another (more money) group of people.
- June 7, 1997: Editor Michael Reneigar signs up his life in a poignant limerick which begins, "There once was a comic book specialty retailer from Nantucket."
- September 9, 1997: Associate Editor Benn Ray starts sounding like Michael Reneigar, he commits himself to the Syd & Marty Kroft Center in Beverly Hills, California for treatment. Emerges resembling Dr. Shrinker.

Michael Reneigar (Editorial)

- Scott Braden's haircut will finally be linked to those mysterious crop circle formations.

Cathy Disbrow (Graphics)

- **Reality Check** will beat out **Archie** in comic book sales.
- Spider-Man's enemies will all have clones.
- Jill finally become a world-famous choreographer when a professional checks out **FAN Files**.
- The Toy section in **FAN** will become 20 pages long and include a price guide.
- Toph will care.
- Mickey Mouse will make another comeback.
- Todd Hoffer will be given yet another shipping station.
- Disney will step on the next Toy Story film.
- Scott will get a new haircut.
- The independent presses will take over the industry.
- Arnold will meet the rest of the cast of *Star Wars*.
- These stupid crossovers will stop.
- The *Batman* and *Superman Animated Series* will have a crossover.
- The old Aliens line of toys will become wildly popular as the new line is released in conjunction with *Aliens 4*.

John McGonigle (Advertising)

- Benn Ray takes formatting to new lengths and accidentally reformats his brain. When turned back on, Benn begins speaking in tongues and dancing the Macarena.
- After three consecutive nights of watching *Cheating, The Boys in the Band*, and *The Birdcage*, Joseph T. Rybandt finally admits defeat and marries Kristen in May.
- Upon seeing the **TV Guide** photo cover of Robert Urich with no hair, Christopher Woodward decides to finally "care," and donates his hair to Scott Braden.
- In a surprising moment of clarity, Michael Reneigar uses a complete sentence to make his point.
- Hailing great news, doctors at Johns Hopkins determine that 99% of all terminal cancer can be linked to eating large quantities of chili dogs "with the works." Upon hearing this news, Todd Hoffer decides to take matters into his own hands and prepares for his final exit.

Todd Hoffer (Editorial)

- I get my own office downstairs on the loading dock.
- Someone from this office will die by my hands.
- Ray will become Editor of **FAN**. One week later he will mysteriously die after being struck several times in the head with a tape dispenser.
- Michael Renegar will be forced to sell **Hake's Guides** on street corners to pay for his toy habit.
- Arnold will take up residence in a phone booth and proclaim himself as the true Dr. Who.
- Scott, John, and Joe will form their own mime troupe and travel across the country. When they arrive in Los Angeles, they will be beaten to death by angry Hari Krishnas because everybody hates a mime.

Joseph P. Rybandt (Editorial)

- The Marvel titles will go back to their respective universes and forget the whole thing ever again.
- 1997 we'll still have none of the answers to any of the questions posed over the past 20-something years of the X-Men.
- Mike Renegar will still look like a schmoe with a ponytail as he continues to try to grow his hair out.
- Scott Braden will, unwittingly, get another bad haircut and be mocked mercilessly.
- The **Mario** game for the Nintendo 64 will come out, and all our lives will once again be consumed.
- Todd Hoffer will try again with either a new company or join up with someone else.
- The **Novelty Library** will continue to be extremely depressing but continue to provide the most amazing packaging in comics.
- Ray and I will still go out for beers at any happy hour we can find on Friday night.
- I'll be married in May.
- Comics will be printed on newsprint (as God intended) and only cost a buck!

Tohl Woodward (Editorial)

- Our printer will eventually tell us they need the magazine eight weeks in advance, leaving us a day and a half to put the whole thing together each month.
- It will then leave **FAN** to form a rock band named No More Comics.
- All of the self-publishers in the industry will unite and start their own distribution company with no minimum order requirements and only a 50% base industry discount.
- After licensing every character they own, Marvel will find itself having to rent characters from Broadway in order to continue publishing comic books.
- A movie of the week will be made about the comic industry called "Mother May I Sleep With Anyone For A Movie Deal?"
- The only comic which doesn't get its own action figures will be **The Dreaming**. Because, well, there's just not a lot of action.
- After developing a fitness regimen, Scott Braden will be cast as Bane in the upcoming *Batman* movie. The hood will cover the haircut.
- The remaining **FAN** staff will be tragically killed by a mail bomb sent from someplace called Crenshaw, Montana. It will later be discovered that No More Comics was touring Montana right around that time.
- It will be found that only one in 100,850 people in the country know who any of the X-Men are. The comic industry will quickly collapse in upon itself only to be saved by Ross Perot, who will insist Superman marry one of his daughters. Cries of, "But he's a fictional character, Ross," will only be met by "Well, so am I."
- I will play Bob in the *Twin Peaks* movie finale.

ONE MORE TIME... 1996 IN REVIEW

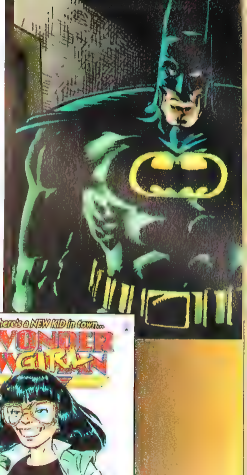
BIG BUZZ BOOKS

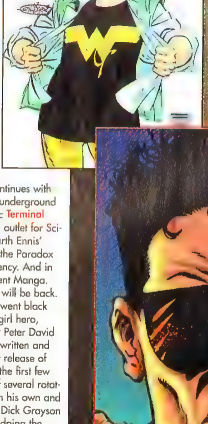
While fans waited in eager anticipation for the latest re-launch from Acclaim, satisfaction came in the form of all of the *Sliders* stuff produced throughout the year. Even the star of the show, Jerry O'Connell got into the action writing his own mini-series! • Acclaim jumped into the "I'll-show-you-my-character-if-you'll-show-me-yours" crossover craze with the **X-O Manowar/Iron Man** book which related directly to the video game. • As the relaunch neared, fans and comic book

ACCLAIM

stores were treated to advance preview copies of their new books. Among those "re-toaled" were **X-O**, **Ninjak**, and **Shadowman** with new titles added to the line as well as the new **Classics Illustrated Study Guides!** Who could ask for anything more?

Everyone that was anyone met this year (and even a few who weren't anyone). DC met Marvel and spawned the **Amalgam** books which seemed to be a bigger hit than the actual crossover books themselves. Continuing in the tradition of company crossovers, everyone that was anyone met this year, including: **Batman/Grendel II** by Matt Wagner, **Batman/Captain America** by John Byrne, **Lobo/Mask**, and **Generation/Vampi**. Hoping to continue in the success of **DC Versus Marvel**, the DC/Marvel: **All Access** mini-series was released. • On the inter-company side of things, characters were popping into the strangest of places **Contagion** and **Legacy** swept through the world of the Bat, bringing back old villains (Ra's Al Ghul) and brutal newer enemies (Bane). **Final Night** turned out the sun and put the superheroes to work on saving the Earth...again. They killed off Hal Jordan in the process, paving the way for the new Green Lantern, Kyle Rayner, to have no one to be compared to. **Starman** and **Sandman Mystery Theatre** met in their respective titles to tell tales of the old...and the new. Fresh from their days gone past in **The Brave and The Bold**, the world's Greatest Detective and the other-worldly Deadman met in a graphic novel scribed by James Robinson. • From the Earth-shattering story that was **Kingdom Come** to the end of a friend we all held dear, 1996 was a time of change at DC. **Sandman #75** was the last monthly tale told by Neil Gaiman involving the characters that won him so many awards. He will be missed. DC, however, leapt to the front by continuing the tales of the dark land with **The Dreaming**. They also dusted off the **Sandman** series for a chance with a new audience by introducing the reprint series **Essential Vertigo: Sandman** which began re-telling the tales of the King of Dreams. Neil and artist Chris Bachalo took fanoam's favorite female creation, Death, out for a spin in a mini-series this year. Vertigo, owing much to Alan Moore and his work on **Swamp Thing**, re-released those issues under the Essential Vertigo line. They also brought to a close the new monthly tales of the Swamp God. On the more grandiose side of things, Mark Waid and Alex Ross amazed the planet with the Elseworlds tale, **Kingdom Come**. The Universe has yet to feel all the repercussions, but they're coming. • The title that helped make Garth Ennis famous, **Hellblazer** (now in the very capable hands of Paul Jenkins), hit the 100 mark. Garth, as we all know, went on to untold success with **Preacher**, continued his tales of violence and debauchery with the **Arseface Special** and the **Saint of Killers** mini-series. Garth had more in his bag o' tricks and, with the help of artist John McCrea, brought a newer character into the spotlight, Hitman. • Back on the Vertigo side of things, several intriguing new projects were brought to the forefront. **House of Secrets** once again opened its doors, this time with writer Steven Seagle exploring the dark side of Seattle. Vertigo Verite scored an artistic hit with the beautiful and wordless work by Peter Kuper, **The System**. Owning up once again to the work that came before, DC re-released the under-rated **Blood** and continues with plans to follow up **Moonshadow** with an end-all one-shot. Long-time underground creator Dean Motter saw the bright light of day with his deco-futuristic **Terminal City**. The once named Matrix imprint, now named Helix, offered an outlet for Sci-Fi fans everywhere. Ranging from Howard Chaykin's **Cyberella** to Garth Ennis' **Bloody Mary**, Helix is building a universe from the cosmos up. • On the Paradox side of things, the **Big Book** line kept coming out with alarming frequency. And in perhaps one of the stranger moves from a publisher of its size, DC went Manga. **Tron** debuted through the Paradox line in a four-issue mini-series...he will be back. • Back to the mainstream...kind of. Along more artistic lines, Batman went black and white for four issues...and never looked better. The all-American girl hero, **Supergirl** is once again in action thanks to the monthly work by writer Peter David and artist Gary Frank. However, **Supergirl** is not the only intelligently written and beautifully drawn "female-lead" book out there. 1996 let the one-shot release of **Black Canary/Oracle: Birds of Prey** slip by without much fervor...for the first few days at least. The one-shot garnered so much attention that the first of several rotating mini-series debuted this year. Nightwing has finally stepped out on his own and left the shadow of the Bat and Gotham. **Nightwing**, the series, allows Dick Grayson to make out his own justice without the watchful eye of the Batman. Bridging the gap between Vertigo and the rest of DC, the newly re-formed **Night Force** fills the long dormant horror niche. Also on the "let's-take-this-out-for-a-spin" dept.: The Challengers of the Unknown are back and exploring the "darker" side of DC. A





brand new Teen Titans is back with the youthful Atom at the helm. John Byrne took over the ailing New Gods and sees them through with the new Fourth World series. Aztek came...and went. The biggest and brightest in the way of revamping comes in the form of JLA by Grant Morrison; never have these characters shone with more grace, fun and beauty. • The ever ambitious DC made several more big moves this year. Perhaps the most ambitious is the 13-part Batman: The Long Halloween by writer Jeph Loeb and artist Tim Sale. Never to be outdone by his dark compatriot, Superman finally wedded Lois Lane. And as if to further one-up the Dark Knight, Superman Adventures debuted continuing the tradition of excellence begun by the animated Caped Crusader.

Perhaps the biggest event that directly tied-in to Dark Horse was the galaxy spanning Shadows of the Empire Continuing their excellent faith in the property, the series was received wonderfully by all. Speaking of Star Wars, although he won't, Mark Hamill entered comics with his first work for the medium, The Black Pearl. • Dark Horse continued with plans to celebrate their Tenth Anniversary even though the movie *Barb Wire* failed miserably at the box office. New Barb Wire comics were available this year and proved that sometimes a comic idea is better than a movie idea. On the Tenth Ann. note, a four issue mini-series, A Decade of Dark Horse, celebrating the diversity and quality that is Dark Horse, more than met expectations. • On the Legend side of things, while fans wait to see the Legend logo appear on any of John Byrne's DC books, prolific Mike Mignola continued to gain readers with the latest Hellboy mini-series, [illegible] Devil. He even got into what's now called "crossover madness" as the paranormal met the paranormal in Ghost/Hellboy. Frank Miller continued to pound out hard-boiled crime Sin City-style in the form of That Yellow Bastard and the just-in-time for Christmas Lost, Lonely and Lethal. Paul Chadwick addressed issues relating to the planet we all have to live on in Terra Incognita: Mountain. Continuing the "crossover madness" Nexus met Madman in a ginchy-keen one-shot. Perhaps the biggest event from Legend was the finally released Monkeyman and O'Brien series from Arthur Adams...it's about damn time! • Back to the rest of Dark Horse, Fear Agent debuted and then took refuge with another publisher. Tarzan met the Predator and fled the battle to his own monthly series. Harlen Ellison's Dream Corridor returned...only to be canceled. The ultra-violent Blanc Noir line debuted with Body Bags by the extremely pent-up Jason Pearson. The Grifter met the Mask. Barry Windsor-Smith returned to comics in a big way...literally. The over-sized BWS: Storyteller managed both to delight fans and confuse them. ("Oh Lord, how do I store this thing!")

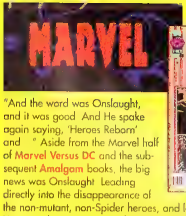
DARK HORSE COMICS

Aside from "Who's suing whom?" and "I'm not playing with you[r] studio anymore, I'm leaving," Image actually put out some comic[s] books this year. Todd "I was just biding my time" McFarlane finally spun off [illegible] as he hit the .50 issue mark. [illegible] the new ongoing

series, while [illegible] sets up the dark one for more self-contained adventures. Spawn also met the WildC.A.T.s this year in a crossover of epic proportions. • And hey what a surprise, the crossovers were fast and plentiful in the Image Universe. From inter-studio [illegible] and Medieval Spawn/WitchBlade to teaming up with the House Ideas, here's a quick look at who met whom:

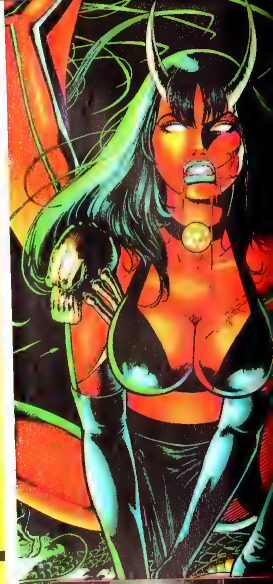
[illegible] In related news, the Savage Dragon met God in the ultra controversial [illegible]

#31. Continuing successes also were in abundance at Image, ranging from the spin-off Tales of the WitchBlade (as Top Cow went from Image to Top Cow to back to Image) to the variant-laden release of DV8. Adam Hughes finally delivered the second half of his take on Gen13—Ordinary Heroes. Before breaking big with the success of DV8, Humberto Ramos left his mark on the ongoing and the mini, Art of Works. With Jim Lee's new Homage Studios imprint focusing on creator-owned books, Image picked up the pieces from the first run and continues to weave tales of wonder. Paul Smith returned to comics with writer James Robinson for Leave it to Chance. Rounding out the creator-owned corner of Image was Strangers in Paradise by Terry Moore. Moore also entered into the superhero arena with the monthly writing of Lady Supreme. • "It's broke...fix it!" seemed to be a cry heard in abundance at Image. From the re-tooling of by Alan Moore to the addition of artist Chris Sprouse on the "former house of Extreme" (now with all titles under the banner of Maximum Press) added quality to their failing characters. Image also became the haven for the smaller publisher. In addition to the aforementioned SIP, Image took over the publishing chores of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, A Distant Soil, the retro Strangers, and most recently the titles published by Malibu/Ultraverse Comics. Jeff Smith's Bone left the Image fold. • As for the success of the later half of '96 into 1997: The Darkness by Garth Ennis and Marc Silvestri looks to be a sure-fire winner, as well as the debut of Wynonne Earp from FAN-favorite Beau Smith.



"And the word was Onslaught, and it was good. And He spake again saying, 'Heroes Reborn' and " Aside from the Marvel half of Marvel Versus DC and the subsequent Amalgam books, the big news was Onslaught. Leading directly into the disappearance of the non-mutant, non-Spider heroes, and leading into the Heroes Reborn. Iron Man, the Fantastic Four, Captain America, the Avengers, Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld were all waiting with baited breath as Onslaught ran its course. As Waid and Garney were wrapping up their brilliant run on Cap, fans were beginning to suspect the worst of Professor Charles Xavier, and the worst of Marvel. Yet, the Heroes Reborn books attacked stores and fans with new ideas and variants. For the time being, satisfaction was at hand. • Marvel continued to move and shake with what they had left. Mike Deodato Jr. added his art to the Hulk, as Peter David moved the green giant into the possible future of the Maestro storyline. Daredevil got a lift as the new team of writer Karl Kesel and artist Cary Nord gave the Man Without Fear a much needed Kiss of Life. Speaking of Daredevil, Elektra returned in her own series by writer Peter Milligan. Frank's not too pleased. The latest Marvel Exodus occurred in the X-group as writers, Mark Waid, Jeph Loeb, and Warren Ellis all left for greener pastures. On the plus side, artist Chris Bachalo returned to the book which has been rich and famous, Generation X, and got to re-introduce Howard the Duck to the '90s. Eager anticipation turned to bitter disappointment as X-Nation came and went. • Perhaps the biggest news occurred late in the year as Spider-Man returned to all his glory. With the final death of the Clone and the return of the Green Goblin, 1997 looks to be a bright spot for fans of the web-slinger. • Marvel made more news with their 99¢ line featuring the remarkable Untold Tales of Spider-Man. Affordable good comics, how long can it last? Several long—

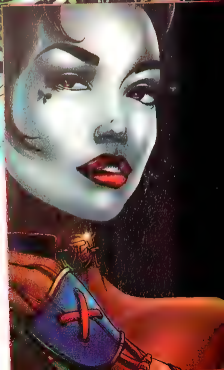
distance titles were reached this year; Thor hit #500 and in the wake of Heroes Reborn, reverted back to the Journey Into Mystery title. Also before being whisked away, the Avengers reached the #400 mark. In a confusing move, Wolverine hit issue #100 and lost his humanity...hate to see what happens to him at #200. • The crossovers continued at Marvel. Iron Man met X-O which seemed fitting since X-O met Iron Man. Top Cow and Marvel sent all their characters after one another. Last, and certainly least, Star Trek crossed over with the X-Men. Desperate times ...



No more Image, no more Extreme...only Maximum Press, 'nuff said! Rob and Co. continued to bring us the new adventures of Battlestar Galactica; and in a similar vein, they are planning to resurrect the Bionic Man and Woman in comic book form • The sleeper-hit of the year, Darkchylde by Randy Queen, razzled and dazzled fans this year. Of course there were variant covers! In the ever-continuing "crossover madness," the beautiful Avengelyne met the Warrior Nun known as Areala.

TOPPS

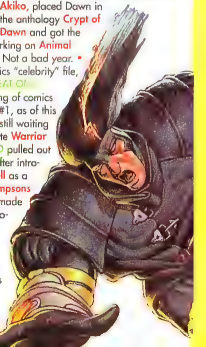
The big word is Mars Attacks and Topps has it! The series continued this year and added a one shot to the line as Mars Attacked the great American pastime, Baywatch...errr, we mean Baseball! Look for all sorts of comics to tie into the Tim Burton film • The other big word is X-Files, and once again Topps has it! Spinning-off from the monthly ongoing, adaptations of the show began with X-Files Season One! • Lady Rawhide returned with a brand new mini-series from Don McGregor.



THE BEST OF ALL THE REST

COMICS **Femforce** set another small-press landmark by hitting the 100 mark. • Another triumphant return to comics was presented by Martin Wagner's **Hepcats** through ANTARCTIC PRESS. • On a very similar note, BIG ENTERTAINMENT started over with a whole batch of new #1 issues at the early part of '96 that looked pretty unsuccessful by the end of '96! • BLACK PRODUCTIONS kept themselves on the map after producing **Jar of Fools**; they went on to work with **Jar** creator Jason Lutes on the new **Berlin**. • BROADWAY With the debut of **Fatale** and **Knights on Broadway** early in the year, they closed their doors at the end of the year. C'est la vie. Three strikes (although it's been more like five!) and you're out! • BYRON PREISS put away their computer software for a little while and went to the drawing board producing a new line of printed comics including, **The Suit** and **They Call Me The Skul**. • CALIBER Several indies returned this year including **Mister X** and **Rust**. David Mack's **Kabuki** went color this year and has never looked better. • A big year at CHAOS! as all things they put out found their way not only into the fans' hands, but onto several **FAN** lists as well. **Lady Death: The Odyssey, Purgatori,** and the most-recent, **Lady Death: The Crucible**, place Chaos! up there with the big boys. • A busy year at CRUSADE, Billy and Co. released a slew of Shi-related books including **Tomoe, Tomoe/Witchblade, Manga Shi, Shi/Daredevil** and the non Shi **Atomik Angels**. • EL CAPITAN put out **Stray Bullets** when they were able but more than satisfied fans with the collected **Stray Bullets** hardcover, **Innocence of Nihilism**. • EVENT COMICS prepares to kick it into high gear in 1997. 1996 saw the groundwork laid for future plans in such titles as **Ash** and **Ash/22 Brides**. • FAN [illegible]OMICS had a year of mixed blessings; on the down side was the end of **Love and Rockets** with issue #50 as Bros. Hernandez continue their craft with various new series. On the upside, Bill Willingham returned to comics after a very long hiatus with **Coventry**. Bob Fingerman's **Minimum Wage** continued to be one of the most underrated series of the year. And finally, Lisa left Buddy in a *very special* **Hate** #25. • 1996 was the 25th

Anniversary of the original bad-girl, Vampirella. HARRIS celebrated in style bringing in new talent to present their interpretation of Vampi. • KITCHEN SINK cashed in on the anticipation of the latest **Crow** film with various new **Crow** mini-series. James O'Barr contributed covers to the series when he had the time. • LONDON NIGHT STUDIOS cornered the "real-life" babe market by pulling in and putting out JJ North as Tommi Gunn (now replaced with the "tag-hat-to-handle" Elizabeth Parkhurst), and Carmen Electra for the series **Embrace**. **Razor** was re-introduced with a new #1 issue and saw some action in the crossover with Warrior Nun. • **Wandering Star** made the move to SIRIUS. **Poison Elves** saw a trade paperback collection of the very-hard-to-find Mulehide Graphics issues of I, **Lusiphur**, more TPB's to follow. Furthering their diversity, Sirius launched the lauded **Akiko**, placed Dawn in the anthology **Crypt of Dawn** and got the Dark One working on **Animal Mystic** again. Not a bad year. • From the comics "celebrity" file, ULTIMATE CREATIONS entered the ring of comics with **Warrior** #1, as of this writing we're still waiting for the way-late **Warrior** #3. • BONGO pulled out all the stops after introducing **Roswell** as a back-up in **Simpsons Comics**; they made the series ongoing. • WARP GRAPHICS realized that they had way too many titles and cut it all back to the core **Elfquest**

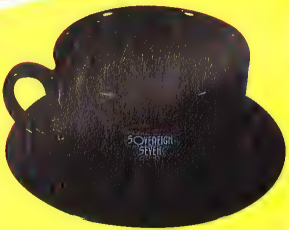


GINCHY NON-COMIC PRODUCT

We all go to the comic shop for comics, but what about all the other stuff? In this day and age, sometimes the other stuff is a lot more fun than the latest installment of Mutant Morphing Bat-Love (no, that's not a new title or kids show). We at FAN love wandering the store and looking at all the cool stuff, and here's a sample of what 1996 had to offer.

To start off 1997, count away the days to the next issue of **FAN** with the Vertigo calendar. Over-sized and with beautiful art, it's the perfect compliment to your home or office. • In the world of smoke and fire, nothing is cooler than a Zippo. From Robert Crumb to **Sin City** to **Milk and Cheese**, take five and smoke 'em if you got 'em! • We're still waiting for the lunch box and the disc gun, but the Madman yo-yo and the magnets kept us in check for another year. They also followed up the groovy Madman card-set from a couple of years ago with the next set of 50. • There's nothing like sitting around playing poker with the boys, especially with your Bone playing cards. And when you need another brew, step up to the refrigerator covered in Bone magnets. • Speaking of drinks and poker, nothing's served up better than in a Lady Death mug sitting on the Lady Death coaster set! • Lots of statues this year; there is of course the 10th Anniversary material being released for **The Dark Knight Returns**. Then there was the cool flora/fauna Swamp Thing statue. The Sandman bookends were a little pricey, but they're perfect to keep your hardcover collections of the **Sandman** in-

between. • As far as great battles go, nothing beats Doomsday vs. Supes (except maybe a Hulk/Thing battle), and that classic confrontation came to life in the form of the Superman/Doomsday bookends. • For all of you looking for the next cool collectible, check out the variety of promotional product available from your local comic publisher. You should see all the JLA mobiles hanging in the **FAN** offices. • The bridge between comics and music is ever moving closer. Peter Bagge put a band together, The Action Suits, and released some really cool 45's with Bagge's art on the sleeve. • The world of **Sovereign Seven** revolves around a coffee shop, and what better way to live the series, than to have a steaming cup o' java with the over-sized **S7** coffee mug. • Dark Horse continued to do those really cool three-sheet posters ranging from **Sin City** to **Madman**, these things are awesome. • Perhaps the best deal of all this stuff was the Hellboy bust; priced affordably and sculpted beautifully, this is the winner of the year!



THE NEW, THE DEAD, AND THE REVISED

Comics in '96 offered some new faces, got rid of some old ones, as well as changed some old faces to look like brand new. Confused? Well, here's the score card...

THE NEW!

Here's just a smattering of all the new additions to the world of comics. If we missed one or two, well...there's always next year!

THE AMALGAM CHARACTERS
AMALGAM (DC COMICS/MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT)
Cool characters, cool concepts, and cool comics. Note to publishers—bring them back!!

ALLEGRA
IMAGE COMICS (WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS)
She's sort of a bad girl, but she isn't. Get it?

ATOMIK ANGELS
CRUSADE ENTERTAINMENT
Cool, young kids teaming up to fight the forces of evil. Wait....

AVENGEBLADE
MAXIMUM PRESS
Bad girls? We don't need no stinking bad girls!!

AZTEK, THE ULTIMATE MAN
DC COMICS
Chosen as the world's last chance against "the approaching darkness," Aztek is a Superman for the '90s—a nice guy who kicks butt and takes names when necessary. No wonder the JLA want him....

BASTION
MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT
The head of a new watchdog group for mutants, expect this "villain" to become a major nemesis for the X-Men, as well as other players in the Marvel Universe. And with everything X quickly leading towards Claremont and Byrne's **Days of Future Past** storyline, that could happen sooner than you might think.

BLOODY MARY
DC COMICS/HELIX
Hell hath no fury....

CYBERELLA
DC COMICS/HELIX
If the Bride of Frankenstein was a rebellious, lil'l cyberpunk—she might look something like this.

DARKCHYLDE
MAXIMUM PRESS
She's gorgeous, deadly...and she's a demon.

DV8
IMAGE COMICS/WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS
What has been described as a team of "dysfunctional, miserable bastards," DV8 pushes the boundaries of grim and gritty to the nth degree. Taking orders from the evil Ivana—Threshold, Capycat, Frostbite, Bliss, Evo, and Powerhaus have been let loose on the populace. Be scared, be very scared!

FIREBRAND
DC COMICS
Old name. New hero. Swell costume.

THE FOOT SOLDIERS
DARK HORSE COMICS
Here's a hint—it's the shoes

HAZARD
IMAGE COMICS/WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS
He's the working man's superhero. Neat, huh?!!

JOSEPH (MAGNETO)
MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT
He's a kinder, gentler, and younger Magneto. Really....

MAGOG
DC COMICS
Magog's one of the new breed of superheroes that takes on the role of judge, jury, and executioner. Behind his weapons and his anger, though, may be a man with the heart of a hero. Will he discover this before it's too late, or will Kingdom Come come true.

MERCY
IMAGE COMICS/TODD MCFARLANE PRODUCTIONS
She's an angel, she's Native American, and she's cool. 'Nuff said!

THE OGRE AND THE APE
DC COMICS
Macabre, new Batman villains. *Scary!!*

ONSLAUGHT
MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT
Yes, kids—he's two, two, two people in one. All the badness of Charles Xavier and Magneto made flesh, Onslaught is the guy responsible for sending our favorite heroes off to the Imageverse while at the same time trying to destroy everything that's Marvel. Down, but not out, we may just see this menace again *real soon!!*

PURGATORI
CHAOS! COMICS
Demon bad grrrrl! She'll make you cry for more.

RAIN (FROM HOUSE OF SECRETS)
DC COMICS/VERTIGO
Moody, Gen X girl witnesses ghost judges prying secrets from others. Still, she's kinda cute.

TAKION
DC COMICS
The living embodiment of the mysterious Source. Don't make him mad.

TEEN TITANS
DC COMICS
They're young (even the Atom), they're new (except the Atom), and they're ready for trouble.

TOMMI GUNN
LONDON NIGHT STUDIOS
She's locked and loaded, baby. Give her a spin!

VIKING SPAWN
IMAGE COMICS/TODD MCFARLANE PRODUCTIONS
He's a Viking! He's a hellspawn! Yeah!

WARRIOR
ULTIMATE CREATIONS
Destrucity, brother. Destrucity

WONDER GIRL
DC COMICS
What's happens when your favorite superheroine is in a jam and needs help? Put on *the shoes* and kick a little butt. F

BEN REILLY (FORMER SPIDER-MAN CLONE)
MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT
It turns out he was the clone all the time. The irony....

HAL JORDAN (FORMER GREEN LANTERN/ PARALLAX)
DC COMICS
Death hits everybody differently. For Hal Jordan, it turned him into space dust.

TONY STARK (FORMER IRON MAN)
MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT
Technically, kids, he's dead. But thanks to Jim Lee, you can catch him every month at your local comic book shop.

RAND BANION (FORMER X-O MANOWAR)
ACCLAIM COMICS
Okay, we didn't see much of this guy, but he made a very cool hero while he lasted!!

THE DEAD !

All ye courageous heroes and venomous villains, we hardly knew ye...

THE REVISED!

(as the word "revise" sparks yet another argument in the FAN editorial department)
All our favorite heroes, but different!

HEROES REBORN
MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT (PRODUCED BY WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS & MAXIMUM PRESS)

Captain America. The Avengers. Fantastic Four. Iron Man. The Hulk. They were Earth's Greatest Heroes and now they've been redrawn and redesigned for a whole new generation to enjoy. Almost six months into Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld's respective contracts, it seems that fans have.

VALIANT HEROES
ACCLAIM COMICS

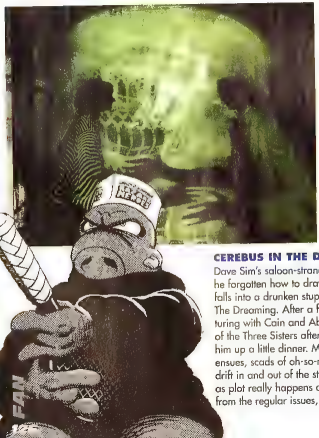
As readers begin to see new versions of their various Valiant titles hit the racks, they'll find out fast that this isn't their older brothers Acclaim Comics. Thanks to Fabian Nicieza bringing in top talent, expect the unexpected from the makers of **X-O Manowar**!

BIONIX
MAXIMUM PRESS

It's the Six Million Dollar Man and the Bionic Woman for the '90s! All we have to say is that Rob Liefeld is hoping that it's better than it was before. Better. Stronger. Faster. F

another top 10 crossovers that should never happen

Since the crossover craze only seems to be gaining speed, it's time for FAN's second annual look at the crossovers no one could possibly want to ever see. This doesn't mean they won't happen, of course. Comic companies seem intent on squeezing every last crossover dollar out of this trend, resulting in continuital complexities you'd need a treasury edition-sized book of charts to comprehend. And last year's list (FAN #9) seems like it was used as source material by the industry when planning the year's big projects. So while this list isn't intended as a preview of any kind....



CEREBUS IN THE DREAMING

Dave Sim's saloon-stranded aardvark (what, has he forgotten how to draw any other setting?) falls into a drunken stupor and journeys off into The Dreaming. After a few pages of mole-posturing with Cain and Abel, Cerebus runs afoul of the Three Sisters after asking them to cook him up a little dinner. Much pontificating ensues, scads of oh-so-mysterious characters drift in and out of the story, and nothing so far as plot really happens at all. Not much different from the regular issues, is it?

WOLVERINE VISITS BONE

Believing he's somehow related to the Rat Creatures, Wolvie heads off to Barrelhaven and scopes things out. Once he real izes the Rat Creatures are a bunch of dim bulbs, he goes ove to Bone's side, until he realizes none of the Bone brothers are that much brighter. Then, after meeting Thorn, Logan swoons bit, and Gran'ma Ben comes along and wipes the floor with him. Wolverine's so impressed he asks her to come back to the mansion and take care of Onslaught ('cuz you know he'll be back this summer).

STAR TREK/X-MEN

Oh, wait, this actually happened already.

THE SIMPSONS' ASTRO CITY SUMMER VACATION

The city of noble, ever-so-sensitive heroes may never recover from a visit by Homer, Bart, Maggie, Lisa, and Marge. Told from the perspective of the Simpson family, tourists in the city of the future, they can't figure out why there's no nuclear waste, no crudely drawn people, and no beer. All is made well, however, when one of those cleverly named heroes rescues the Simpsons from some giant villain that shows up suddenly and is never explained. Includes a special Radioactive Man cameo and Mr. Burns vs. Samoritan back-up story.

STAR WARS: SHADOWS OF THE SPAWN

Industry giants McFarlane and Lucas co-write this one where the Star Wars crew crash-lands in Elysium and is confronted by the Angels, who aren't too keen of the Millennium Falcon smashing up their palace. So there's a trial (they seem to like them there), Han makes a deal with the devil, Spawn shows up looking a lot like Darth Vader, and Angela and Luke trade battle tips. In the end, we get a big escape scene, Spawn gets to kills a few Ewoks, and the droids get cute dialogue. Oh, and they'll make action figures, a novelization, and the comic, but no movie

STRANGERS IN PARADISE JOIN THE JLA

Francine, Katchoo, and David from SIP end up smack dab in the middle of the JLA thanks to some shenanigans from Mr Mxyzptlk. They join up with the world's greatest super team in their battle against Mxyzptlk, but he turns the battle into a love fair as the newly married Superman forgets all about Lois and romances Francine, while David and Katchoo (in usual fashion) end up fighting each other trying to win the heart of Wonder Woman and Batman lurks in the shadows grimacing with con[illegible]. Sounds like a bad episode of Rikki Lake...or an effort to be more like X-Men.

by Christopher Woodward

PINKY AND THE BRAIN KILL THE IMAGE UNIVERSE

In their undying efforts to take over the world, Warner Bros.' two lab mice decide doing away with all of the Image heroes will guarantee them global domination. All of the WildC.A.T.S folks go easy enough after Brain, disguised as Mr. Majestic, tells them to fly directly into the sun. Spawn bites the dust after Pinky accidentally pulls the thread that unravels the Spawn-suit. And just as Image is about to disappear forever, Pinky goofs up when he succumbs to the charms of Fairchild, who promptly locks the mice back in their cages. Damn, we were so close...

SHI/PREACHER: BLOOD OF SAINT OF KILLERS

Set in Feudal China, there's quite a feud when Shi and the Saint of Killers are forced to cooperate in this two-part crossover. The DC half has more dead bodies than you can count, Shi going head to head with the devil, and still a few more dead bodies. The Crusade half is long on pin-ups and short on plot, as the Saint and Shi both dress up in ancient Chinese samurai suits and strike poses, which is fine for the shapely Shi, but the Saint of Killers just looks silly. And yes, FAN would polybag the 1/2 book as a free insert comic.

THE FANTASTIC FOUR SMURFY SPECIAL

Marvel licenses their characters (hmmm, imagine that) to that '80s Belgian super-company, Peyo, for this one-shot, action-packed comic. Reed, Ben, and Johnny go off to the castle with Papa Smurf and the lads to fight Gargamel and his new ally—Dr. Doom. Things get confusing, when with the FF and Smurfs both being very blue, but, in the end, Doom and Garg end up dangling from a tree by their toes. The Invisible Woman stays in town, finally meaning there's another female in the mushroom village. She and Smurfette fold laundry, do each other's hair, and bake pies for the boys when they return.

CHRIS WARE'S ACME NOVELTY CATWOMAN

Instead of the "plots" acting as excuses to rip strategically located strips from Catwoman's costume, Ware tells stories from Selina Kyle's personal life. And she is one depressed gal. It's no wonder she goes out and steals things at night, because her emotional life is nothing but one series of sad, cat-related tragedies after another. Of course the cut-out toy is a model of Gotham City, which is pretty cool, except for all those tiny cats. Now if Jim Balent had done the cut-out toy....

BATMAN AND ANYONE

Yes, this is the same crossover that ended last year's list, but how many times do we have to tell you? If Bats doesn't even like being in the Justice League, what makes anyone think he'd team up with a different costumed stranger every other week? Enough is enough. If he must be teamed with someone other than Robin, allow us to point out there used to be a title called Brave and the Bold that was pretty good for that sort of thing. Though, again, as long as they don't bring back Bat-Mite, we don't care what they do.

The 1996 Reader's Choice Awards

Ok, so in this issue you're about to see what the critics have picked as the BEST of 1996. But come on, how often are the critics actually right? Now's your chance to pick the your favorites on the year. Photocopy, cut out, mail, or e-mail this entry to
FAN's Reader's Choice Awards
1966 Greenspring Drive, Suite 405
Timonium, MD, 21093
e-mail: fanmail1@aol.com
fanmag@lagunet.com

Feel free to vote as many times as you like. Make your voice heard. Ballots must be received by January 22, 1997. The results will be printed in Overstreet's FAN #23, on sale March 19, 1997.

Name_____ **Age**
Address_____
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City_____
State____ **Zip**___

FAVORITE ONGOING SERIES

FAVORITE NEW SERIES

FAVORITE LIMITED SERIES

FAVORITE BLACK AND WHITE COMIC

FAVORITE WRITER

FAVORITE PENCILER/INKER

FAVORITE PAINTER

FAVORITE COVER ARTIST

BEST PUBLISHER

FAVORITE CROSSOVER

BEST CHARACTER/TITLE REVAMP

FAVORITE GOOD GUY

COOLEST BAD GUY

COOLEST FEMALE CHARACTER

FAVORITE BAD GIRL

FAVORITE TEEN CHARACTER

FAVORITE SUPER TEAM

BEST DRESSED CHARACTER

CHARACTER WITH THE COOLEST HAIR

CHARACTER WITH THE COOLEST SUPER-POWER

COOLEST COMIC RELATED ITEM

FAVORITE VIDEO GAME

FAVORITE TOY LINE

FAVORITE CARTOON

FAVORITE COMIC-RELATED MOVIE

Remember—Vote early and vote often!

1996
F
a

Well, folks, it's that time of year again: the end of the year; that magical time when people get together to celebrate the passing of time and the hope for what the days ahead might hold. That's all fine and good, but as we also know, the end of the year means The FAN Awards. As we predicted in the 1995 FAN Awards, the FANNIES (as we like to call them at the office) have become as respected as the Pulitzer Prize and the Nobel Peace Prize. In fact, responses from last year's winners and nominees were so overwhelming, especially those selected for any "Worst Of" categories, that we've decided to only focus on the positives in the wonderful world of comics. The categories that follow are for what we saw as the best of 1996. That should keep the awards interesting and appease the whiners.

Here's the skinny on how the awards work: Each category was scientifically developed by the FAN editorial department. The entire FAN staff then had the opportunity to use their vast comic knowledge to nominate what they considered the best of 1996 for that category. Based on those nominations, ballots were developed and distributed to the writers/editors/etc. of the magazine. The votes were tallied, and the results are what follows.

Best Ongoing Series

BATMAN AND ROBIN ADVENTURES • DC
PREACHER • DC/VERTIGO
SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE • DC/VERTIGO
STARMAN • DC
UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN • MARVEL

Best Cover Artist

ALEX ROSS (Kingdom Come)
GLENN FABRY (Preacher)
GARY FRANK (Supergirl)
DAVE McKEAN (The Dreaming)
GAVIN WILSON (Sandman Mystery Theatre)

Best Limited Series

BATMAN: THE LONG HALLOWEEN • DC
BIRDS OF PREY: MANHUNT • DC
KINGDOM COME • DC
SIN CITY: THAT YELLOW BASTARD • DARK HORSE
VERTIGO VERITÉ: THE SYSTEM • DC/VERTIGO

Best Writer/Artist

FRANK MILLER
JASON LUTES (Berlin)
MIKE MIGNOLA
TERRY MOORE
ADRIAN TOMINE (Optic Nerve)

Best Bathroom Reading

HITMAN • DC
ANY X-BOOK • MARVEL
LADY DEATH • CHAOS!
PREACHER • DC/VERTIGO
VAMPIRELLA • HARRIS

Best Single Issue

BATMAN AND ROBIN ADVENTURES ANNUAL • DC
BLACK CANARY/ORACLE: BIRDS OF PREY • DC
OPTIC NERVE #3 • DRAWN & QUARTERLY
PREACHER #18 • DC/VERTIGO
SPIDER-MAN #75 • MARVEL

Best Artist TIE

GARY FRANK (Supergirl)
STUART IMMONEN (Final Night)
TONY HARRIS (Starman)
TIM SALE (Batman: Long Halloween)
J.H. WILLIAMS (Legends of the Dark Knight)

Best Writer

ALAN MOORE
Kurt Busiek • Garth Ennis • Grant Morrison • Steven T. Seagle

Best New Series

JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA • DC
House of Secrets • DC/Vertigo
Nightwing • DC Supergirl • DC
Superman Adventures • DC

Best New Talent

FRANK CHO (Liberality)
RODOLFO DAMAGGIO (Green Arrow)
DEV MADDEN (The Batman & Robin Adventures)
FRANK QUITELY (Flex Mentallo)
J.H. WILLIAMS (Batman: LOBK)

Best Funnybook

HATE • FANTAGRAPHICS
AKIKO • SIRIUS
IMPULSE • DC
MINIMUM WAGE • FANTAGRAPHICS
UNIVERSITY2 • 12 ANGRY MONKEYS

Best Revamp

SUPREME • IMAGE
DAREDEVIL • MARVEL
JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA • DC
SPIDER-MAN • MARVEL
SUPERGIRL • DC

Best Reason For Comic Cliff's Notes

THE SPIDER-MAN CLONE SAGA • MARVE
THE DREAMING #4-7 • DC/VERTIG
FIRE FROM HEAVEN • IMAG
LETHARGIC LAD • CRUSAD
PHOENIX RESURRECTION • MALIB

Grooviest Comic-Related Item

MADMAN TO-TO
BONE MAGNETS
MILK & CHEESE ZIPPO LIGHTER
SANDMAN BOOKENDS
SIN CITY ZIPPO LIGHTER

Best Reason To Protect Our Forest

TIE

FLEENER • ZONGO
LETHARGIC LAD • CRUSADE
ANYTHING ZEN • ENTITY
MAGGIE THE CAT • IMAGE
WHOA, NELLIE • FANTAGRAPHICS

Creator We Want To See More Work From

ADRIAN TOMINE (Optic Nerve)
ED BRUBAKER (Lowlife)
PETER KUPER (The System)
JEFF LEVINE (Ho Hopa)
JASON LUTES (Berlin)

Best Argument Against Cover Enhancements/Variant

ALL NUDE EDITIONS
BATMAN #535 • DC
DV8 #1 • IMAGE
LADY DEATH CRUCIBLE 1/2 CLOTH EDITION • CHAOS!/WIZARD PRESS
SUPERMAN: THE WEDDING ALBUM • DC

Best Crossover

...NE AMALGAM UNIVERSE • DC/MARVEL
FINAL NIGHT • DC
...EDIEVAL SPAWN/WITCHBLADE • IMAGE
SANDMAN/STARMAN • DC
DEATHBLOW/WOLVERINE • IMAGE

Best Gimmick

GEN13 #1 A-D-E • IMAGE Batman #530-532 • DC Detective #700 • DC DV8 #1 (variants) • Image Green Lantern #81 • DC

Best Comic Cover Price

99¢

Best Storyline

...RAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY," ...APTAIN AMERICA
...EGACY," BATMAN BOOKS • DC
...UNTERS," PREACHER • DC/VERTIGO
...E MIST," SANDMAN MYSTERY ...EATRE • DC/VERTIGO
...AND AND STARS," STARMAN • DC

Best Reason For Characters To Stay In Their Own Universe

STAR TREK/X-MEN • MARVEL/PARAMOUNT
BADROCK/WOLVERINE • IMAGE
DC/MARVEL: ALL ACCESS • DC
DC VS. MARVEL • DC/MARVEL
YOUNGBLOOD/X-FORCE • IMAGE/MARVEL

Most Anatomically Incorrect

Best Reason For Mandatory Character Retirement

CAPTAIN AMERICA
THE AVENGERS
CATWOMAN
GEN13
IMPULSE

• • • • • • • •

CAPTAIN AMERICA
THE AVENGERS
FANTASTIC FOUR
NEW GODS
TEEN TITANS

Best Series You Haven't Heard Of

AGME NOVELTY LIBRARY • FANTAGRAPHICS MINIMUM WAGE • FANTAGRAPHI

Best Use Of Gratuitous Violence

PREACHER • DC/VERTIGO
HITMAN • DC
MEDIEVAL SPAWN/WITCHBLADE • IMAGE
POISON ELVES • SIRIUS
STRAY BULLETS • EL CAPITAN

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

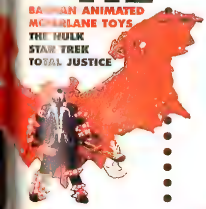
Best Reason To Get Up on Saturday Morning

THE TICK
FREAKAZOID!!!
SPIDER-MAN
SUPERMAN ADVENTURES
X-MEN

Best Reason to Buddy Up To Toy Store Clerk

TIE

BATMAN ANIMATED
MCFARLANE TOYS
THE HULK
STAR TREK
TOTAL JUSTICE



Our Favorite Mutant

Best Attempt To Get Your Hard Earned Cash

STAR WARS: SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE
DARK HORSE
DC VS. MARVEL • DC/MARVEL
ESSENTIAL VERTIGO • DC/VERTIGO
HEROES REBORN • MARVEL
ONSLAUGHT • MARVEL

Best Dressed Character

BRUCE WAYNE
John Constantine
Emma Frost
Jack Knight
Matt Murdock

UNCLE THE UNTOUCHABLE • Artie & Leech • Emma Frost • M • J.C. Vaughn, FAN's Marketing Coordinator

Berlin • Black Eye Productions Dear Julia, • Black Eye Productions Lowlife • Aeon

Best Cartoon Not on Saturday Morning

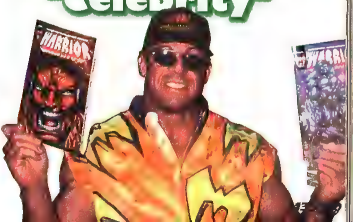
THE SIMPSONS
AEON FLUX
BEAVIS & BUTTHEAD
THE MAXX
SPACE GHOST: COAST TO COAST

Best Reason To Eat Fast Food For Lunch

TACO BELL
DISNEY VIDEO FIGURES • MCDONALDS
GOOSEBUMPS • TACO BELL
MARVEL HAPPY MEAL • MCDONALDS
TOY STORY • BURGER KING

Best Comic "Celebrity"

THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR
RUDY COBY • LABMAN
CARMEN ELECTRA • EMBRACE
MARK HAMILL
RIKKI ROCKETT • SISTERS OF MERCY



"SO, WHATCHA READIN'?"

After reading that big stack of comics every week, ever wonder what your favorite artist, writer, or creator enjoys reading? We do. We have daily debates on the subject around the office (yes, we're a pathetic lot). So we put out the word to comic creators to let us know what their favorite comics were last year. The following are the people who gave us an answer when we asked them:

PETER BAGGE

(Creator of Hate)

Eightball
Frank
Los Bros Hernandez
Black Hole
Tie:
Palooka-Ville
Optic Nerve

SCOTT BRADEN

(Research Editor for Overstreet's FAN and victim of a bad haircut)

Aztek, The Ultimate Man
The Invisibles
Starman
Kurt Busiek's Astro City
Hellboy: Wake The Devil

ARNOLD T. BLUMBERG

(Production Manager for Overstreet's FAN & Star Collector)

Wandering Star
Strangers in Paradise
Akiko
Vampirella
Spider-Man

KURT BUSIEK

(Writer of Astro City and Untold Tales of Spider-Man)

Leave It To Chance
Kane
Kingdom Come
Savage Dragon
Monkeyman & O'Brien

*but ask him again in 10 minutes and his list may change

PAUL CHADWICK

(Creator of Concrete)

Book of Ballads and Sagas
Ragmop
Minimum Wage
Monkeyman and O'Brien
Hellboy: Wake The Devil/The Monstermen: Silent As The Grave

NANCY COLLINS

(Novelist and writer of Dhampire)

The Dreaming
Monkeyman & O'Brien
Hellboy
From Hell
Legion of Superheroes

JOHN BYRNE

(Writer of New Gods and Wonder Woman)

Pinky & The Brain
Batman & Robin Adventures
Sin City
Tarzan/Predator
The **Amalgam** Books (Super Soldier)

CHUCK DIXON

(Writer on Black Canary/Oracle: Birds Of Prey, Detective Comics, and Green Arrow)

Joyride (Carol Lay)
Land of Nod (Jay Stephens)
Legend of the Dark Claw
Tarzan: The Land That Time Forgot
Orgy Bound: The Collection of Daniel Clowes' **Eightball**

CATHY DISBROW

(Graphic Designer and most mentally insane Overstreet's FAN)

Super Information Hig
Reality Check
Batman & Robin Adventures
Strangers in Paradi
Leave It To Chance
Kurt Busiek's Astro C

JAMIE DELANO

(Writer on Shadowman)

Flex Mentallo
Stuck Rubber Baby
Preacher
Stray Bullets
The Tale of One Bad Rat
Vermillion

JEFF DILLON

(Senior Graphic Designer and Overstreet's FAN's grumpy old man)

Batman & Robin Adventures
Superman Adventures
Generation X
StormWatch

JOHN ESTES

(Writer on Batman/Deadman)
Terminal City
Stray Bullets
Blueberry: Confederate Gold
Saga
Vertigo Verité: Girl
Kingdom Come

BOB FINGERMAN

(Creator of Minimum Wage)
Minimum Wage
Suckle
Hellboy
Preacher
Hummingbird

(Publisher of Boneyard Press)
Sanctuary
Hellblazer
Hitman
Starman
Kabuki

HART FISHER

EVERETTE HARTSOE

(Creator of Razor and publisher of London Night Studios)
Witchblade
Preacher
Dawn
Elektra
Kingdom Come

CULLY HAMNER

(Creator of Brave)
Leave It To Chance
Hellboy
Captain America (Mark Waid & Ron Garney)
Kingdom Come
Sin City: That Yellow Bastard

TODD HOFFER

(Overstreet's FAN's chili-dawg eatin' Managing Editor)
Razor
Mars Attacks
Sisters of Mercy
Gen[12]
Darkchylde

JAMES HUDNALL

(Creator of ESPers)
Ragmop
Jinx
Eightball
Preacher
Age of Heroes/ESPers

DAN JURGENS

(Writer of Superman and Teen Titans)
Stray Bullets
Kurt Busiek's Astro City
Sandman Mystery Theatre
Starman
Berlin

TEDDY KRISTIANSEN

(Artist on House of Secrets)
Berlin
The Sands
Palooka-Ville
Lava
Sandman Mystery Theatre

ADAM KUBERT

(Artist on X-Men and Ka-Zar)
Sin City: That Yellow Bastard
Captain America (Mark Waid & Ron Garney)
Untold Tales of Spider-Man
Hellboy
Preacher

PETER KUPER

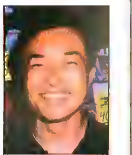
(Writer/Artist of Vertigo Verité: The System)
Palooka-Ville
Eightball
Acme Novelty Library
Optic Nerve
Too Much Coffee Man

ERIK LARSEN

(Creator of The Savage Dragon)
Big Bang
Minimum Wage
Sin City
Hellboy

JIM LEE

(Artist on Fantastic Four, creator of WildC.A.T.S)
Preacher Trade Paperback
Gen[13] #13 (A, B, C)
Iron Man #1
Strangers In Paradise V2#1
Stray Bullets Hardcover



(Creator of Hellshock)
Kingdom Come
Hellblazer
Hellboy
From Hell
Voodoo Child

JAE LEE

ROB LIEFELD

(Publisher of Maximum Press and artist on Captain America and The Avengers)
Supreme #41
Supreme #42
Supreme #43
Ironman #1
Bone

JEPH LOEB

(Writer of Batman: The Long Halloween, Captain America, and The Avengers)
Generation X #20
Batman: The Long Halloween #1
Impulse #16 & #17
Supreme #41 & #42
No Hope (Jeff Levine)

JEFF MARIOTTE

(Writer of Hazard and columnist for Overstreet's FAN)
Hazard
Kurt Busiek's Astro City
Strangers in Paradise
Impulse
Spectre

RON MARZ

(Writer of Green Lantern and Parallax: Emerald Night)
Hellboy
Sin City
Starman
Terminal City
Batman: Black & White

MARK MILLAR

(Writer of Aztek, The Ultimate Man and Swamp Thing)
Kingdom Come
Justice League America (Grant Morrison & Howard Porter)
Flash (Mark Waid)
Preacher
The Invisibles

GRANT MORRISON

(Writer of Justice League America and The Invisibles)
Swamp Thing
Preacher
Flash
Kingdom Come
Kurt Busiek's Astro City

ADAM POLLINA

(Artist on X-Force and Rise of Apocalypse)
Ghost Rider
Generation X
Gen^{13}: Ordinary Heroes
Death: The High Cost of Livi
Domu

JERRY ORDWAY

(Writer of Power of Shazam!)
X-Men/ClanDestine
Sin City
Hellboy
Savage Dragon
The Grackle

JIMMY PALMIOTTI

(Artist and co-creator of Ash)
Ash (No brainer!)
Hellboy
Preacher
22 Brides
Impulse

BRIAN PULIDO

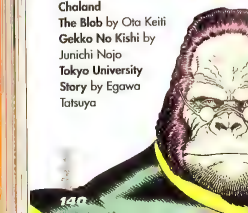
(Publisher of Chaos! Comics and writer of Evil E
Lady Death, and Purgatori)
Johnny The Homicidal Maniac
Spectre
Preacher: Saint of Killers
Sin City: That Yellow Bastard
Preacher

PAUL POPE

(Creator of THB)
Vigilante: City Lights, Prarie Justice
Nexus: Executioner's Song
Chaland
The Blob by Ota Keiti
Gekko No Kishi by Junichi Nojo
Tokyo University Story by Egawa Tatsuya

JOE QUESADA

(Artist and co-creator of Ash)
Preacher
Leave It To Chance
Kingdom Come
Hellboy
Savage Dragon



JAMES ROBINSON

(Writer of Batman/Deadman, Leave It To Chance, and Starman)
Hellboy
Paul Grist's Kane
Palooka-Ville
Sin City: That Yellow Bastard
Kurt Busiek's Astro City/ Usagi Yojimbo

BENN RAY

(Assoc Edito Overstr FAN (self-appoi arbiter of
Bi
Minimum W
H
Eigh
Optic N

ALEX ROSS

(Artist on Kingdom Come)

Acme Novelty Library
Land of Nod
Schitzo
Sandman Mystery Theatre
Hellboy

JOSEPH R. RYBANDT

(Copy Editor and Staff Writer for Overstreet's FAN and old-school punk enthusiast)

Untold Tales of Spider-Man
Batman: The Long Halloween
Preacher
Starman
Hellblazer

TIM SALE

(Artist on **Batman: The Long Halloween**)

Batman Black and White
House of Secrets
Batman/Grendel II
Leave It To Chance

DAVE SIM

(Creator of Cerebus)

Eddie Campbell's Bacchus
Roarin' Rick's Rare Bit Fiends
Hate
Tag 'N' buster
Naughty Bits

STEVEN T. SEAGLE

(Writer on House of Secrets and Sandman Mystery Theatre)

"The 5 books I like but wish more people read"

Minimum Wage
Acme Novelty Library
Kane
Palooka-Ville
Terminal City

BEAU SMITH

(Writer of Wynonna Earp and columnist for Overstreet's FAN)

Aliens: Mondo Heat
Milk And Cheese
Monkeyman and O'Brien
Robin
Guy Gardner: Warrior (Wanna make somethin' of it?)

JIM VALENTINO

(Creator of Shadowhawk)

Sin City
From Hell
Stray Bullets
Acme Novelty Library
Starman

JEFF SMITH

(Creator of Bone)

Acme Novelty Library
Buzz Buzz
Kingdom Come
Kurt Busiek's Astro City
Book of Ballads and Sagas

J.C. VAUGHN

(Marketing Coordinator for Overstreet's FAN and evil mutant)

Nexus: Executioner's Song
Sin City
Knights On Broadway
Captain America
The Grackle

RICK VEITCH

(Creator of Roarin' Rick's Rare Bit Fiends)

From Hell
Jim/Frank
Tyrant
Cerebus
Suckle

MARK WAID

(Writer of Flash, Impulse, Kingdom Come and X-O Manowar)

JLA (Grant Morrison & Howard Porter)
Magnus (Tom Peyer & Mike McKone)
Daredevil (Karl Kesel & Cory Nord)
Kurt Busiek's Astro City
Aztek, The Ultimate Man

SHANNON WHEELER

(Creator of Too Much Coffee Man)

Milk & Cheese
Eightball
Tom Hart (any)
Too Much Coffee Man
Color Special
King of Persia

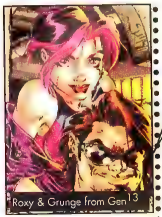
CHRISTOPHER WOODWARD

(Staff Writer, Copy Editor, and resident nasty old man for Overstreet's FAN)

Optic Nerve
Batman & Robin Adventures
Manya
Books of Magic
No Hope

HOLLYWOOD BABBLE-ON

BY BENN RAY



Roxy & Grunge from Gen13

DISNEY, WILDSTORM, & SWEETPEA MAKE 3

Jim Lee's Gen13 will come to the big screen in the future. And who is the company that will bring this to you? No, not AT&T. It's actually 3 companies: Disney, WildStorm, and SweetPea. Disney just acquired the rights for a live action *Gen13* feature film, and it reportedly only cost them in the mid-six figures to get. Jim Lee will executive produce the project with Courtney Solomon and John Benitz (from SweetPea) producing.

Disney will also distribute the *Gen13* animated direct to video feature that Kevin (*Batman: The Animated Series*) Altieri is directing.

Super Happenings

FANTASTIC VOYAGE

The film adaptation of Marvel's The Fantastic Four has finally moved out of the development stage and into pre-production, with a current filming schedule to begin next summer for a 1998 release. The captain of this ship will be none other than Chris (*Nine Months, Home Alone*) Columbus. After Columbus read writer Michael (*Cliffhanger*) France's script, he decided that he not only wanted to produce the flick, but direct it as well; this motivated the bigshots at 20th Century Fox to move the film into the pre-production stage. There is currently no budget set for the film, but expect it to be pricey. State-of-the-art computer generated special effects will be used to help recreate the fantastic powers of Reed, Sue,

The Fantastic Four

- Johnny and Ben. FF creator Stan Lee and Bernd Eichinger (whose company did the shelved low-budget 1993 version with producer Roger Corman) are both attached as executive producers.

SUPER HAPPENINGS

Here are some events tentatively planned to occur on *The Superman Adventures*, the WB cartoon TV show:

- Green Lantern and Guy Gardner will appear sometime in the second season.
- Supergirl will appear on the show. She will be from a neighboring moon of Krypton called Argos, and she'll be crashing at Jonathan & Martha Kent's pad.
- Once the daily series begins in '97, the Joker & Harley Quinn will be taking a road-trip to Metropolis to team up with Lex Luthor. Of course, the Dark Knight will be hot on their trail.
- Some future battle royales include Supes and Darkseid, the Parasite, and Lobo.
- The epic battle that Superman has with Lobo lasts for two episodes.
- The world of Superman isn't impervious to femme fatales. A new villainess called Livewire

THE ANTI-GRAVITY ROOM

Just in case you missed any episodes of the coolest TV show about comics, here is the schedule for *THE ANTI GRAVITY ROOM* for the rest of the year. This show airs on the SCI-FI CHANNEL. Keep in mind that these shows are all repeats of this past season. However, the show was just renewed for another 13 episodes so far in '97.

Date	Time	Episode
12/20	8:30 AM	Fun and Games
12/21	11:00 AM	Comic Books on the Screen
12/27	8:30 AM	Comic Books on the Screen
12/28	11:00 AM	Old Stories New Twists

AGR host Nick Scoullar

AGR host Phil Guerrero

will test the Man of Steel's mettle.
•Although there are no current plans for Superboy to show up, Steel will.
•A story in the works is called "Bizarro's World." You do the math.
•Celebrity voices: Lori (*Tank Girl*) Petty plays Livewire; Gilbert Gottfried plays Mr. Mxyzptlk (can somebody out there send me the correct way to pronounce his name?); and Sandra Bernhard plays Mr. Mxyzptlk's main squeeze.
•Superman and the Flash have a race for charity that's interrupted by the Weather Wizard. Unfortunately, we don't find out if it's Barry Allen or Wally West behind the Flash's mask.
•Supes may go mano y mano with Doomsday in the second season.
•Superman will also get a check-up from Dr. Fate.
•*Superman: The Last Son of Krypton* is an all new animated feature available on video. This 75-minute tape is the introduction of the Man of Steel to the animated world in the '90s.

GO, GO, GODZILLA!

He first appeared way back in 1954, wreaking havoc in Japan. Since then, he has gone on to star in 22 films, cause an immense amount of property damage, and become the undisputed king of the big-screen monsters. He may have been resting quietly for the last few years, but in the summer of 1998, he's planning a helluva comeback. TriStar Pictures have signed the wonder team of Dean Devlin and Roland Emmerich (the guys who brought us this past summer's *Independence Day*) to bring the Lizard King back to the big screen.

The movie is already in preproduction, with the main production beginning in the spring. Emmerich and Devlin will co-write this venture with Emmerich directing and Devlin producing. There's still no word yet as to whether Godzilla will make an appearance.

HIGH-CALIBER MOVIES

Brian Michael Bendis' A.K.A. Goldfish, Caliber Comics' crime noir tale of redemption and loss, is now on the big screen fast track. Director Gary Fleder (*Things To Do In Denver When You're Dead*, and the upcoming *Kiss The Girls* starring Morgan Freeman and Ashley Judd) has been given the project. Overseeing the production is producer David Engel, who has recently closed a deal with Jim Rudnall and Dan Brereton to bring their comic, The Psycho, to the big screen.

EMBRACE ME

Carmen Electra is the inspiration behind London Night Studios' comic Embrace. Now we all get to see even more of the musician/model/superhero. She will replace Jenny McCarthy on MTV's *Singled Out*. There is also currently a motion picture deal in the works for **Embrace**.

FLASH FORWARD

ABSOLUTE POWER

Breed: Staying Out Of The Line Of Fire
Studio: Sony/Columbia
Release: February
Director: Clint Eastwood
Screenplay: William Goldman
The Players: Clint Eastwood, Gene Hackman, Scott Glenn, Ed Harris, Judy Davis, Laura Linney, Dennis Haysbert
Insider Info: This film is based on the novel by David Baldacci.
The Lowdown: A young lawyer tries to help a criminal (Eastwood) who witnesses Secret Service agents murdering the President's mistress. The catch is that the criminal can't reveal the perpetrators without facing prosecution himself. Meanwhile, the Secret Service are on to him, so the baddies have to be taken down, Eastwood-style.
The Tip: Oh that Gene Hackman. He's good in anything. [Clap. Clap. Clap.]

Ransom

Michael Richards learns by *Trial and Error*.

Salma Hayek is born to dance in: Fools Rush In

FOOLS RUSH IN

Breed: Actually, They Do Breed In This Romantic Comedy
Studio: Sony/Columbia
Release: February 7
Director: Andy Tennant
Screenplay: Joan Taylor, Katherine Reback
The Players: Matthew Perry, Salma Hayek, Jon Tenney, Siobhan Fallon, Jill Clayburgh
Insider Info: Perry reportedly received $1 million for this part. This flick is based on the real-life experiences of the film's producer Doug Draizin.
The Lowdown: He (Perry) is a man from the cold, heartless corporate halls of Manhattan. She (Hayek) is a Mexican-American dancer from the fiery, desert casinos of Las Vegas. Together they have a one night stand, a baby, a marriage, and love—in that order.
The Tip: Hhhmmm, such old-fashioned inclinations in such unlikely characters. Maybe one day they'll even bring back arranged marriages.

HOWARD STERN'S PRIVATE PARTS

Breed: Self-Aggrandizing Comedy
Studio: Paramount
Release: February 14
Director: Betty Thomas
Screenplay: Len Blum
The Players: Howard Stern, Mary McCormack, Robin Quivers, Fred Norris, Jackie Martling, Richard Portnow, Gary Dell'Abate, Allison Janney
Insider Info: Producer Ivan Reitman directed *Stripes* and *Meatballs*, while director Thomas directed HBO's ever-tasteful *The Late Shift* and *The Brady Bunch*.
The Lowdown: This bio-pic unnecessarily chronicles the life and times of shock-jock Stern, based on his autobiography. It spans his life from annoying child to annoying adult.
The Tip: Probably a tasteful and insightful expose into what makes a Howard Stern. Uh-huh.

McHALE'S NAVY

Breed: Based On A TV Show Action/Comedy
Studio: Universal
Release: TBA
Director: Bryan Spicer
Screenplay: Peter Crabbe
The Players: Tom Arnold, David Alan Grier, Dean Stockwell, Tim Curry, Debra Messing, Bruce Campbell, Henry Cho, Brian Haley, French Stewart, Danton Stone
Insider Info: The production crew had to contend with hurricanes and Montezuma's revenge to get this movie made. Tom Arnold reportedly received $4 million for playing the role of McHale. The U.S. Navy did not give their cooperation for the filming of this movie. However, the Mexican Navy did (yet another benefit of NAFTA). Look for Ernest Borgnine (the original McHale from the '62-'66 TV series) to make cameos.
The Lowdown: McHale (Arnold) must contend with his nemesis, Lt. Penelope Carter (Messing), a by-the-book officer who just happens to be his love interest.
The Tip: Two words for ya: *Sgt. Bilko*.

MURDER AT 1600

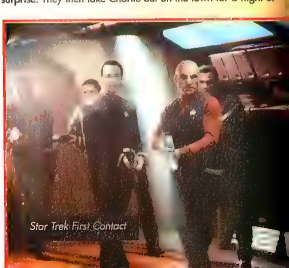
Breed: Political-Based Thriller With A Conspiracy Edge
Studio: Warner Bros./New Regency
Release: January
Director: Dwight Little
Screenplay: Wayne Beach, David Hodgin
The Players: Wesley Snipes, Diane Lane, Daniel Benzali, Jason Robards, Alan Alda, Dennis Miller, Charles Rocket, Ronny Cox, Diane Baker, Tate Donovan, Doug O'Keefe
Insider Info: Snipes will reportedly receive $10 million for this role. Little was the same guy who directed *Free Willy 2*..
The Lowdown: Snipes plays a detective investigating a murder at the White House. When a member of the president's family is implicated, the Secret Service tries to thwart his investigation.
The Tip: It was probably a Republican administration.

OVERNIGHT DELIVERY

Breed: Road-Movie Comedy
Studio: New Line
Release: February
Director: Jason Bloom
Screenplay: Kevin Smith
The Players: Paul Rudd, Reese Witherspoon, Christine Taylor, Larry Drake, Tobin Bell
Insider Info: Producers Brad Jenkel and Dan Etheridge also produced *Dumb & Dumber*.
The Lowdown: When a stripper convinces a Midwest student to send his long-distance girlfriend an overnight Dear John letter based on some bad information he received about his girlfriend cheating on him, he, in the sobering light of day, soon finds he was not only mistaken about her but is also on a road trip to capture the letter or beat it to its destination.
The Tip: Sounds like a lost episode of *Three's Company*.

TRIAL AND ERROR

Breed: Pre-Nuptial Comedy
Studio: New Line
Release: February
Director: Jonathan Lynn
Screenplay: Sabra Bernstein, Gregory Bernstein
The Players: Michael Richards, Jeff Daniels, Charlie Theron
Insider Info: Director Lynn also brought us the forgettable *Sgt. Bilko* and the overrated *My Cousin Vinny*.
The Lowdown: Charlie's (Daniels) bachelor party is called off because he's sent out of town on a career-making (or breaking) court case for his boss and father-in-law-to-be. His pal Ricky (Richards) is determined to see his friend off into the land of matrimony, so he and the boys check into his hotel room before him for a surprise. They then take Charlie out on the town for a night of



Star Trek First Contact

loaze, bar fights and painkillers that leave the attorney amatose. So it's up to Ricky (a conveniently out of work actor) o take his buddy's place in court and win the case.
The Trip: Wasn't this a movie with Tom Hanks and Adrian Zmed called *Bachelor Party*?

PICTURES THAT MOVE

STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT

Paramount, PG-13

This is definitely not a kinder, genter *Star Trek* The special effects are better than ever, and pacing and character development have been co-opted for action. Unfortunately, this flick makes no allowances for anyone not familiar with the *Star Trek* mythos. In-jokes, character motivations, and past histories are things that will only become apporent if you watch the shows and have seen the other movies. It's the story of Captain Ahab (Capt. Picard) and his obsessive hunt for the Great White Whale (the Borg—a cyber-organic race looking to assimilate the universe). And just like in **Moby Dick**, the single-minded captain is willing to sacrifice ship and crew to exterminate the creature that scarred him. Picard's pursuit of the Borg takes him back in time (these guys go through time like most people go through doors—"Time, the final frontier..."). The pacing of *First Contact* is mind-boggling—evidently scene transitions are something that don't exist in the future (Picard says "Make it so," and immediately it happens). Unfortunately, the typical *Trek* pitfalls shine through the new glossy paint: Lines so cheesy it would embarrass the Swiss and plot-holes big enough for the Enterprise to fit through are spackled over with one-line explanations. The Enterprise has set its coordinates and is warping in the right direction, it just needs to get out of the Neutral Zone.

—Benn Ray

RANSOM

Touchstone, R

Pity the wealthy. You see, these elite few who have all the privileges of their riches have their problems too; because they are wealthy, they become targets of slime (y'know, average people desperate to make a buck because the economy that the rich control is not helping their lot in life). That's what happens as kidnappers take Tom Mullen's (Mel Gibson) son. When an FBI operation fails to get his son back, Mullen decides to take matters in his own hands and resolve the situation how he knows best (playing hard ball and through crooked deals—there's already an innocent man in jail because of Mullen's business ethics). Every character is corrupt, crooked, or just plain unlikable on some level (except for one of the kidnappers, played remarkably well by Donny Wahlberg—y'know, Marky Mark), yet director Ron Howard expects his audience to sympathize with the Mullens—and evidently they do. At the screening I attended, people were actually cheering for Gibson's questionable hero. Suddenly, when faced with the possible death of his son, the business tycoon turns action hero and fights it out in the middle of a busy New York street. It's a fight to the death as a New York cop gone bad (Gary Sinese) evidently doesn't have the street savvy to beat a billionaire in a fight. By the end, you wish the kidnappers would've just packed up the kid's head in a box and mailed it back to Mullen the first time the deal went sour. That's how certain other businesses would've handled it, like the Corleone family, the CIA, etc.

—Benn Ray

MICROCOSMOS

Miramax, G

One thing movies offer is an escape from our lives into a different world. Sometimes it's a wondrous place full of strange creatures and behaviors *MicroCosmos* takes us into a beautiful and alien world—the one under our feet. Co-directors Claude Nuridsang and Marie Perennou (two people with a little too much time on their hands) spent years designing special film equipment and filming insects. The result is an hour and a half of the wonderful world of bugs. There is very little voice narration—merely an introduction and a closing —Nuridsang and Perennou let the cinematography speak for itself. The insects' behavior is much more revealing than some stuffy narrator describing what you're seeing. At times suspenseful, dramatic, humorous, and engaging, it's still not clear why this isn't a PBS special or a picture showing at the local I-Max.

—Benn Ray

FAN FIFTEEN

		WEEK IN TOTAL	$$$ TOTAL	TOTAL TO DATE
1. "SPACE JAM" (WB)		4*	$28,509,529	$27,528,529
2. RANSOM (BV/TCH)		2*	$22,274,113	$67,143,873
3. "THE MIRROR HAS TWO FACES" (SONY)		2*	$12,210,868	$12,210,868
4. SET IT OFF (NL)		3	$9,852,310	$20,795,685
5. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S ROMEO & JULIET (FOX)		3	$5,421,137	$31,434,358
6. SLEEPERS (WB)		6	$2,310,554	$47,085,143
7. FIRST WIVES CLUB (PARA)		9	$1,311,641	$99,356,318
8. HIGH SCHOOL HIGH (SONY/TS)		4	$1,302,370	$19,068,691
9. THE GHOST AND THE DARKNESS (PARA)		6	$1,038,749	$36,166,456
10. MICHAEL COLLINS (WB)		4	$809,107	$9,462,670
11. INDEPENDENCE DAY (FOX)		20	$745,473	$304,738,610
12. STEPHEN KING'S THINNER (PARA)		4	$636,300	$14,211,501
13. JACK (BV/HOLL)		5	$521,637	$57,172,494
14. DEAR GOD (PARA)		8	$518,281	$6,545,308
15. BIG NIGHT (GOLDWYN)		9	$497,120	$9,197,671

*opener **Friday-Saturday-Sunday total source: Exhibitor Relations, Co.

BILL PLYMPTON'S SURREAL WORLD

Watching a Bill Plympton film is a transmutating experience. Objects you thought you knew shift and morph into entirely unsettling images that can alternately warp, tease or generally please your head. Check out any of his animated shorts or such films as *The Tune* and it's no wonder he's become one of the major independent forces in the animation world.

ILLUSTRATED HUMOR

"Even when I did illustrations, I liked to take people and change them into really strange things," Plympton admits. "It's surrealism; that's the nature of my humor. Not so much Dali. [More like] Magritte. Tex Avery and Bob Clampett did the same things. They took things and turned them into weird images, too."

In fact, Plympton started his career as an illustrator. His first editorial work appeared in no less august publications as the **New York Times** and a number of other major newspapers (he was even syndicated through Universal Press). At the same time, he also was doing work for the **National Lampoon**, **Screw**, **Playboy** and **Hustler**. In other words, Bill Plympton's palette covered a wide area ranging from the politically incorrect to the hardcore humorous and then onto the stuff that the Christian Coalition would never approve of (even if it wasn't political or humorous).

In fact, you can now get a gander of many of these illustrations through Plympton's own self-published **Sleazy Cartoons of Bill Plympton**, which is now out just in time for you to stock your favorite stockings with. Still, in spite of an illustrating career that most of the pros would envy, Plympton wasn't happy.

"By the late '70s, I was getting pretty good money from doing straight illustrations, gag and adult cartoons and political cartoons. I always loved animation, but never felt I could do it," he admits. "I thought it was technically too difficult."

BOOMING ANIMATION

That all changed due to the intervention of producer Valeria Wasilewski, who asked if he'd mind animating a song by Jules Feiffer called "Boomtown." With the help of another of the film's producers, Connie D'Antuono, Plympton learned the craft of classic cel animation (which is all he still does—no computers for him). The rest, as they say, is history.

"When it came out it was a big hit and won all kinds of awards, that got me to say 'Hey, this isn't so bad,'" says Plympton. "From there I decided to start doing my own shorts. That's what got me to do *Your Face*, which also got to be a huge success."

Plympton won a ton of awards for "Boomtown." His next totally original short, *Drawing Lesson #2*, won him even more. By 1988, he was nominated for an Oscar for his short *Your Face*, which you might be able to catch on cable.

WHERE TO SEE IT

"Cable has become a really fertile ground for animators," he says. "It's become the biggest employer of animators thanks to the success of shows like *Beavis & Butt-Head*, *Liquid Television* and shows on the Sci-Fi Channel and the Cartoon Network. Thanks to cable, animation has become a really hot medium. I just recently sold my whole library to Robert Redford for his Sundance Channel, I made a big chunk of money from that deal. That now means you can see my stuff on four different cable channels: MTV, Bravo, the Independent Channel and Sundance."

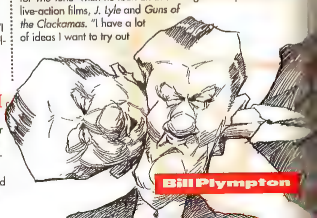
You can also see Plympton's work in theatres. Admittedly, it will have to be one of those movie houses where the espresso better be really good or the experience is lost, but it's there.

SINGING A DIFFERENT TUNE

Plympton's first full-length feature work was 1992's *The Tune*. It collected some of his best known short work and provided new footage for 'toon heads to marvel at. "I thought it would be a good idea to put my short films together," says Plympton. "That's when I found out that it only came out to about half the length I needed. Also, I realized for the amount of time I spent making all those short films, I could have made a full feature film. Because I did those shorts, I got to finance it, otherwise no one would have given me the money. They gave me some money, and when I told them I would add some new stuff to it, they gave me even more."

It didn't hurt that by this time Plympton won the Prix du Jury from Cannes film festival and was so hot that ad agencies were offering him what he called "mind-boggling and obscene" amounts of money to produce TV commercials. That money also helped Plympton finance *The Tune*.

As you might have guessed, Plympton won even more awards for *The Tune*. Then he took an interesting side step to create two live-action films, *J. Lyle* and *Guns of the Clockamas*. "I have a lot of ideas I want to try out



that can't be done with animation," Plympton admits, "but I'm not tired of animation yet."

A STRANGE PERSON

Indeed, Plympton is now hard at work on his second major animation feature, *I Married A Strange Person*. Due for an early '97 release, it's probably best to let Plympton describe this one than try to explain it myself.

"It's not a musical review like *The Tune* is," says Plympton. "It's a more violent, Japanese-animation influenced film. It's much more character driven and sexual, fast and with very little dialogue, which makes for the best form of film."

"There's this married couple. The husband, Grant, starts manifesting very bizarre behavior, surrealism starts manifesting all over the household. Grant's wife doesn't know what to make of all this. She can't decide if he's possessed by the Devil or he's become a god figure. He's starting to manifest all these super powers and it comes to the attention of this Ted Turner/Rupert Murdoch kind of guy. He realizes if he can take control of the guy, he can take over the world. So he tries to capture Grant and it becomes this epic battle between Grant against the media. All the while, his wife can't decide whether to support him or to bring him down."

Whatever it's final manifestation, if his past work is any indication, *I Married A Strange Person* sounds like just the thing the animation industry needs right now. Plympton explains why.

"The animation world is rapidly becoming unlimited," he says. "I wouldn't be surprised if soon you'll start seeing a lot more adult fare. The kids who once sat and watched classic animation are now adults and they want to see more adult themes. It really hasn't been exploited at all except by the Japanese, who are doing a lot of good stuff. I'd like to do stuff that is strictly for adults and has no fear of offending anybody."

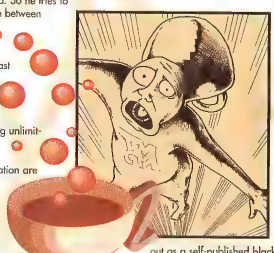
Sounds like Plympton is going far to push animation that way. Keep your eyes open for *I Married A Strange Person* to hit your local art house theatre.

THE TOO MUCH COFFEE FIX

Speaking of more adult fare, that seems to be just what we're going to have if we get lucky. Shannon Wheeler and new studio Invision have announced they have sealed a deal to produce a series based on Wheeler's comic book **Too Much Coffee Man**.

If that ain't enough, Wheeler has also just completed some stuff for MTV the nature of which he doesn't want to own up to at this moment (probably for fear that his local Texas BATF would go after him the same way they went after David Koresh, but that's another story). All Wheeler will admit is the MTV stuff is non-TMCM and he appreciated the fact they treated him as a true creator and not just some guy who only had one creative idea in his entire life. An MTV source states the stuff is all in development as one of the top priorities in his schedule.

Getting back to the one true hero of the '90s though, Too Much Coffee Man has already made his television debut through a TV commercial for Converse sneakers (the one where he shreds his Chuck Taylor's to make coffee filters and ends up with the company logo tattooed on his tongue). In the meantime, you can see TMCM combat indigestion, a serious weight problem, modern angst and that nasty ring around the bathtub in the comics Wheeler publishes through his own Adhesive Comics.

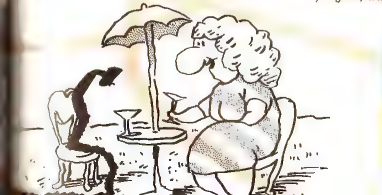


Invision's Executive VP, Michael Hack, states there's no definite plans exactly where TMCM will finally show up and in what form, but the studio is hard at work on those details right now.

"*Too Much Coffee Man* is much like *The Tick*, which also started out as a self-published black-and-white book and has a unique appeal to adults," says Hack."

In a way, TMCM "IS" a superhero, albeit a hapless one, just because he's getting through life in the '90s. That's part of the appeal, you can personally relate to what Too Much Coffee Man goes through, but he says and does what we're afraid to."

Why that's worth a vanilla triple latte (or some equally obscene aberration of the black blood of artists and cybergeeks) in itself. F



GROUND CONTROL

FAN's resident sci-fi geeks and Ground Control guys, Arnold T. Blumberg and Christopher Woodward, take a look back at the year in sci-fi; the good, the bad, and the alien. These guys really need to get out more.

BEST REASON TO OWN A MAC LAPTOP

Their uncanny ability to access and shut down massive alien operating systems with a few keystrokes, as Jeff Goldblum did in the slam-bang summer hit, *Independence Day*. Just try to defeat the Martian invasion with an IBM-compatible and see how far you get!

BEST USE OF A PREHISTORIC PLANET

Star Trek: Voyager's season-ending cliffhanger, wherein Janeway and crew are stranded by the nasty Kazon to fend for themselves against cool computer-generated monsters and poorly dressed cave-people.

GROSSEST ALIENS ON TELEVISION

The *Dark Skies* hive. Just pay attention and don't open your mouth.

COOLEST ALIENS ON TELEVISION

The Vorta, from the Gamma Quadrant on *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. They control the J'em Hadar and talk nasty to Sisko. And you thought Cardassians were crafty.

WEIRDEST ALIENS ON TELEVISION

The plasticized, pneumatically-enhanced female lifeguards on *Baywatch*. What? They're not aliens? Hmm, well they're certainly not human.

BEST REASON TO KEEP THE LIGHTS ON

Millennium. You can't stop it. Although having seen it, some of us would like to.

BEST REASON TO TURN THE LIGHTS BACK OFF

The X-Files. The truth is out there. Bring a flashlight.

BEST GRATUITOUS SCI-FI BODY COUNT

Independence Day. At least half the planet's population get fried and Earth gets a lot roomier.

SECOND BEST GRATUITOUS SCI-FI BODY COUNT

Star Trek: Voyager's season premiere, in which some regul red-shirts were killed, as well as Maquis-turned-Kazon trai Seska and psycho-turned-creepy botanist Mr. Suder. Any chance Tom Paris will be next?

BEST REASON TO CELEBRATE STAR TREK'S 30TH ANNIVERSAR

It's a toss-up between the absolutely stunning "Trials and Tribble-ations" episode of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, an the action-packed epic *Star Trek: First Contact*, the best gi to *Trek* fans that anyone could hope for.

BEST REASON NOT TO CELEBRAT STAR TREK'S 30TH ANNIVER-SARY

The UPN live broad cast of the 30th Anniversary Speci

Do the words "embarrassing fiasco" sound familiar? If it weren't for the sneak preview of *Star Trek: First Contact*, th would also qualify as **Best Reason Not To Set Your VCR**.

BEST SCI-FI NON-EVENT

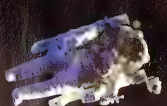
Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire. There was no movie, merchandise came out to coordinate with anything else, e the action figures weren't even that great.

BEST REASON NOT TO HATE WILLIAM SHATNER

The "Trials and Tribble-ations" episode of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, which paired the DS9 crew wi the classic Trekkers beautifully.

BEST REASON TO GO BACK TO THE OLD STAR TREK UNIFORMS

Dax in the aforementioned "Trial and Tribble-ations" episode.



BEST ARGUMENT FOR BIRTHING CHAMBERS

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. Now let's see, Kira's pregnant with O'Brien's baby, but it's actually his and Keiko's, but in real life, it's Bashir's? And what's this about Worf and Dax?

BEST DRESSED TIME TRAVELER

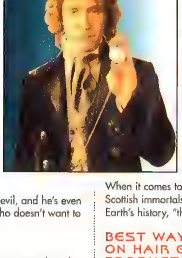
Paul McGann's Eighth Doctor in *Doctor Who*, who traveled in style in Fox's TV movie. And check out that spacious TARDIS!

BEST PASSING OF THE BATON

Seventh Doctor Sylvester McCoy, last seen on the final episode of the BBC *Doctor Who* in 1989, returned in a dramatic cameo to regenerate into McGann's engaging new persona. Definitely the most heart-wrenching and tragic death of any Doctor, and McCoy played it beautifully.

BEST OVER-THE-TOP PERFORMANCE

Doctor Who's Eric Roberts as the Doctor's arch-enemy, the Master. Stepping into a role so distinctly defined by several British predecessors, Roberts added his rammy best to make the part his own. "This won't hurt...much!"



BEST EXCUSE TO KEEP AN ICEPICK HANDY

According to *The X-Files*, it's the only thing that will kill the alien colonizers. Aim for the back of the neck and leave it there.

BEST EXCUSE TO SUPPORT THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY

The *X-Files*' Cancer Man. He's suave, he's evil, and he's even gotten an alien to cure his lung cancer. Who doesn't want to be like him?

BEST X-FILES RIP-OFF

This was a tough one, particularly with every network and even the *X-Files*' creator himself trying to make lightning strike twice. *Dark Skies, The Profiler, Millennium*—all of them and more lay claim to the title, but there wasn't any contest. It had to be *Baywatch Nights*. That's right, after a hard day's work at the beach, Mitch and his buddies like to hit the streets and investigate paranormal phenomena. Like Pamela Lee.

BEST GUILTY PLEASURE IN SCI-FI TV

Xena, Warrior Princess. OK, we all know why some of us tune in, but there's no denying that there's more to this show than breastplates. Mixing mythology, religion, and modern sensibilities, Xena has had some almost clever plotlines, and the fighting sequences are some of the best choreographed melees ever filmed.

BEST EPISODE OF THE AFORE-MENTIONED GUILTY PLEASURE

"Girls Just Wanna Have Fun," the Halloween episode of *Xena*. You see, Xena's cute sidekick, Gabrielle, was captured by a bunch of nasty vampire women who worship Bacchus. They put the bite on Gabrielle, send her to do the same to Xena, and the magic and mayhem ensued from there. Treasure the moment.

BEST EXAMPLE OF NETWORK "SCI-FI"

3rd Rock From the Sun. There really isn't any need to discuss it further. Shh...let's be real quiet and maybe they'll go away.

BEST KEPT SECRET IN SYNDICATED SCI-FI

Sure we all know about *DS9* and the *Hercules/Xena* franchise, but did you notice that *Highlander* is still on? It may not be perfect but it's puttered along quietly for years, growing beyond the beheading-of-the-week format to feature some thought-provoking storylines and intriguing guest stars. When it comes to syndie sci-fi about Scottish immortals battling throughout Earth's history, "there can be only one."

BEST WAY TO CUT DOWN ON HAIR GROOMING PRODUCTS

Former *Babylon 5* Commander Sinclair's dramatic transformation into a Minbari toward the end of the third season. Now he can throw away that shampoo, and best of all, he never has to look at Jerry Doyle's disturbing, Bruce Willis-gone-awry haircut again.

SECOND BEST WAY TO CUT DOWN ON HAIR GROOMING PRODUCTS

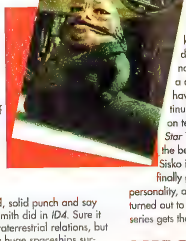
Star Trek: Voyager's nasty, egotistical villains, the Kazon, are apparently gone for good, taking with them their impossibly tall and messy heads of hair.

BEST REASON GEORGE TAKEI SHOULDN'T GET HIS OWN TREK SHOW

Grace Lee Whitney. If you saw their guest appearance on *Star Trek: Voyager*, you know why.

BEST REASON TO HAVE THE WHITE STAR BACK YOU UP ON A VISIT TO Z'HA'DUM

The explosive third season cliffhanger of *Babylon 5*. Sheridan took the fight to the Shadows, the whole place blew up, and we've only just passed the halfway mark in the big 5-year storyline! In a sea of mediocre network sci-fi, *Babylon 5* is one of humanity's last best hopes for quality SF television.



BEST WAY TO GREET ALIEN VISITORS

Clock them in the head with a good, solid punch and say "Welcome to Earth!" just like Will Smith did in *ID4*. Sure it may not foster pleasant human/extraterrestrial relations, but when was the last time you saw fifty huge spaceships surround a planet in the name of peace? Wait a minute ..

THE LAST TIME YOU SAW FIFTY HUGE SPACESHIPS SURROUND A PLANET

V. This brilliant television mini-series and its sequel, *V: The Final Battle*, predated *ID4* by thirteen years, and is currently enjoying a rebirth of popularity on the Sci-Fi Channel. Watch in awe. Savor the moment when the Visitors are first welcomed to Earth by the Worst High School Band in history playing the Most Atrocious Version Ever of the *Star Wars* theme.

BEST REASON TO LOOK FORWARD TO '97

Star Wars on the big screen again. All three of them. With all new special effects and footage including Jabba chatting with Han in *A New Hope*. Sure, Lucasfilm doesn't need any more money, but

SECOND BEST REASON TO LOOK FORWARD TO '97

The Borg on *Star Trek: Voyager*. Would somebody please assimilate Neelix?

BEST SCI-FI MOVIE OF '96

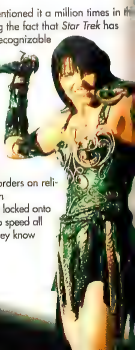
Forget *ID4*. Forget *Mars Attacks*. It was an even-numbered *Star Trek* film, and it was amazing. *Star Trek: First Contact* may well be the best *Trek* we've ever seen, and it was head-and-shoulders above the crowd when it came to great sci-fi cinema this year. It was Picard like you've never seen him and the ultimate Trek villains—the relentless, terrifying Borg. Plus fantastic special effects courtesy of ILM and thrilling action sequences throughout. Why even bother to resist? This is where the line must be drawn.

BEST SCI-FI TV OF '96

Sure, the new *Star Trak: Voyager* season is engrossing, yes, and *Millennium* is hard to take your eyes off of, true. *Dark Skies* is kitschy, cool, and creepy, and there's little doubt *Babylon 5* is as good as it's ever been. If not for a few missteps in plot and scripting (and a disappointing season opener), *X-Files* would have the title this year, as Mulder and Scully continue to be two of the most intriguing characters on television. But there's simply no competition—*Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* has been brilliant since the beginning of its fourth season. Avery Brooks' Sisko is now a force to be reckoned with, Worf has finally gelled with the cast, Dax has at last found a personality, and the device of the Klingon invasion has turned out to be a cool plotline after all. It's time this *Trek* series gets the respect it deserves.

BEST SCI-FI EVENT OF '96

So what if we've already mentioned it a million times in this list alone. There's no denying the fact that *Star Trek* has grown into the single most recognizable pop-culture movement in American history, and the modern mythology that is *Star Trek* has proliferated over the past three decades into a marketing empire that encompasses television, film, animation, merchandise of every conceivable kind, and a following that borders on religious fanaticism. Happy 30th Anniversary, *Star Trek*! We're locked onto the 21st century, and it's warp speed all the way! (Forgive them, for they know not what they do.) F

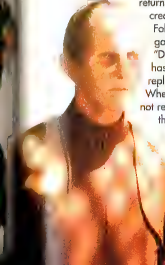


STAR TREK '97 PREVIEW

The 30th anniversary hoopla has died down, we're still floating on the wonderful highs of "Trials and Tribble-ations," and *First Contact* is still packing them in across the country. So are the good folks at *Star Trek Central* going to sit back and relax? Certainly not! After turning out some of the best *Trek* ever produced in the past year, Rick Berman and co have plans to keep things rolling through the 31st anniversary. On *Deep Space Nine*, perhaps the finest Trek series ever produced, Odo will soon regain his shape-changing abilities. A two-part episode featuring Kai Winn (Louise Fletcher), titled "Rapture," will introduce the *First Contact*-style uniforms to *DS9*. Penny Johnson, who played the recurring role of Captain Sisko's girlfriend, Kasidy Yates, is in negotiations to return to the show, and she may be carrying a bouquet when she does. That's right, wedding bells may chime for Sisko by the end of the season.

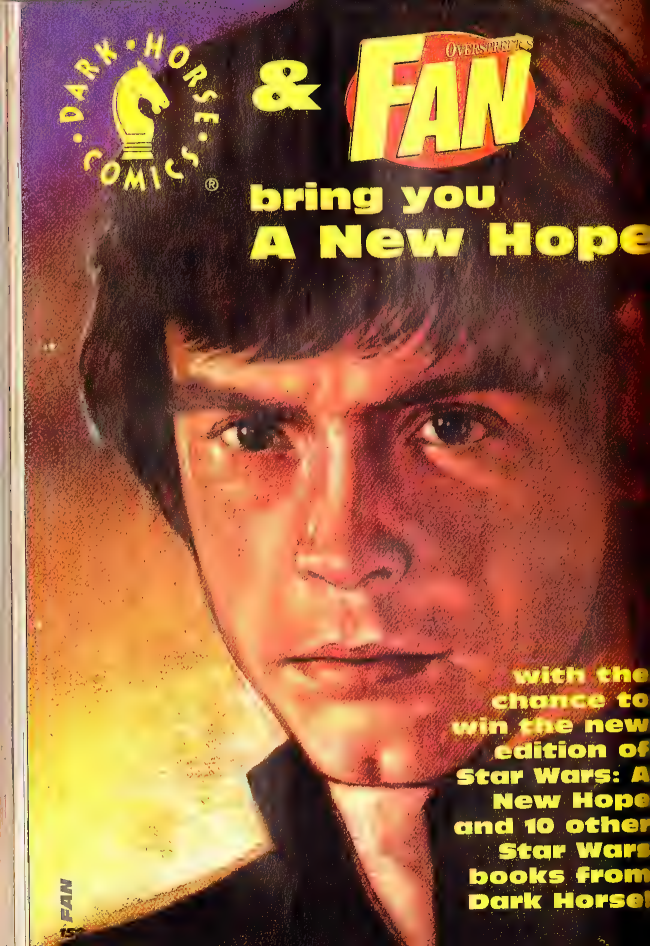
Over on *Voyager*, a show that continues to falter despite some improvements this season, production has already wrapped on an episode sure to draw even the most jaded *Trek* fans to tune in. Following their spectacular big-screen debut, the Borg will engage *Voyager* in February. On an episode provisionally titled "Unity," the lost starship finally enters the region of the Delta Quadrant inhabited by the terrifying, inhuman collective, and discovers a race even more powerful and dangerous than the Borg. This common enemy and the Borg themselves will likely become recurring threats on the show. Q (John DeLancie), the being who first introduced the Federation to the Borg, will return to *Voyager* intending to procreate with Captain Janeway. Following the death of a renegade Q in last season's superb "Death Wish," the Q Continuum has fallen into civil war, and a replacement Q is the only answer. Whether Janeway acquiesces or not remains to be seen. "The Q and the Grey" will also air in February, and may bring the *First Contact* uniforms to *Voyager* as well—you just never know with Q.

—Arnold T. Blumberg

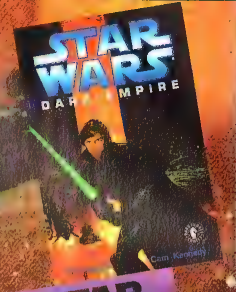


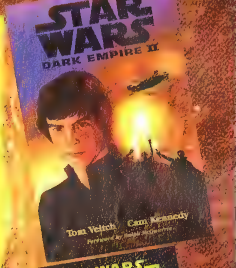
NEW Q-CONTINUUM BOOSTERS FROM DECIPHER

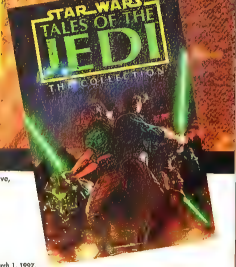
Decipher, manufacturers of the wildly successful **Star Trek: The Next Generation** collectible card game, has released their second follow-up series of cards for use with the game: **Q Continuum**. Focusing on Q and the unpredictable nature of his character, the expansion cards allow players to create side decks of cards to be used to cause strange and problematic events to interrupt opponents' plans. *Star Trek* fans will be pleased once again with Decipher's work on the set, as each card crisply recalls an episode or situation from the TV series. The set also includes many regular cards which can be used apart from any of the special **Q** decks, and fit perfectly within the regular, original game. Cards are currently available only in booster packs of 15, which include 11 common cards, 3 uncommon cards, and one rare card. Decipher sources indicate that only a limited number of cards have been made, much as was the case with their first expansion set, **Alternate Universe**.


DARK HORSE COMICS®
&
OVERSTREET'S
FAN
bring you
A New Hope
with the
chance to
win the new
edition of
Star Wars: A
New Hope
and 10 other
Star Wars
books from
Dark Horse!
FAN

Just as Star Wars: A New Hope is being readied for rerelease into theaters across the country, it's your chance to win the three trade paperback comic based on the movie from Dark Horse. And to go along with that, Dark Horse is throwing in ten more Star Wars books to complete your collection.







GRAND PRIZE: One winner will receive the following:

- **Dark Empire I**
- **Dark Empire II**
- **Splinter of the Mind's Eye**
- **Droids**
- **Heir to the Empire**
- **Tales of the Jedi**
- **Classic Star Wars Volumes 1-3**
- **Battle of the Bounty Hunters Pop-Up Book**
- **Star Wars: A New Hope trade paperback signed by inker Al Williamson and issues #1-6 of the mini-series signed by Williamson.**

FIRST PRIZE: Four winners will each receive a signed trade paperback of Star Wars: A New Hope.

SECOND PRIZE: Four winners will each receive the complete Star Wars: A New Hope mini-series, with a signed #1.

THIRD PRIZE: Five winners will each receive a signed copy of Star Wars: A New Hope #1.

Plenty of chances to win, so don't delay on this one!

MAY THE FORCE BE WITH THIS ENTRY!

ail mail in the coupon on this page to Gemstone Publishing, Inc., Star Wars Books Contest, 1966 Greenspring Drive, ite 405, Timonium, MD, 21093.

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y necessary. All ents become the property of Gemstone Publishing, Inc and cannot be returned. Entries must be received by March 1, 1997, in the closing date of the contest. Winners will be selected no later than March 15, 1997. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid ies received by Gemstone Publishing, Inc by the closing date of the contest. One entry per person. Contest is open to everyone except employees and their immediate families or agents of Horse Comics, Gemstone Publishing, Inc or Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc. Estimated retail value of prizes is as follows. Grand prize: $250, first prize: $25, second prize: ; third prize: $10. All local, state, and Federal taxes will be the sole responsibility of the prize winner. Canadian and overseas winners are responsible for any duties imposed during ery. All prizes will be awarded, all decisions are final. Gemstone Publishing, Inc reserves the right to substitute prizes of equal or greater value for those listed above. Prizes will be to the name of the contest winner only and are not transferable. Gemstone Publishing, Inc. is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or damaged entries. Winners agree to allow photograph, and/or likeness to be used by Gemstone Publishing, Inc., Lucasfilm, and Dark Horse Comics for promotional purposes unless prohibited by law. Void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law. For the names of winners of all prizes offered, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your request to Gemstone Publishing, Inc. at the address listed above.

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TOYS

NEW BATMAN FIGURES FOR CHRISTMAS

Kenner's latest wave of **Batman** figures should be out right around Christmas or New Year's and will include one of the most anticipated figures of the line: **Harley Quinn**. Also added to the line, to be called "D.U.O. Force," are Vector Wing **Batman**, **Air Strike Robin**, a new **Joker**, a new **Mr. Freeze**, and **Turbo Surge Batman**. The **Batman and Robin** figures come with machines that, when connected, form a huge device to battle **Mr. Freeze**. With the Spring *Batman* movie not that far away, it's no surprise that **Mr. Freeze** has become a focal point in the line.

The **Legends of the Dark Knight** line, however, has totally changed its look, and the figures are fantastic. Bigger and more vicious looking, the new assortment will feature **Assault Gauntlet Batman**, **Twister Strike Scarecrow**, **Dive Claw Robin**, **Neural Claw Batman**, **Lethal Impact Bane**, and **Spline Cape Batman**. All of the figures will arrive in stores at the end of this month and in early '97 and feature completely new packaging.

EXCLUSIVE STAR WARS FIGURE

The Official Star Wars Fan Club has announced it will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of *Star Wars* with an exclusive **Cantina Band Member** figure, available only to fan club members. This is the first time that Kenner Toys has made an exclusive figure for sale and the first time that the **Cantina Band Member** figure has been immortalized as an action figure. Each figure will come with five musical accessories, the most of any **Star Wars** action figure. The exclusive figure will be available for pre-order in January and shipped in May of 1997.

The Star Wars Fan Club exclusive Cantina Band Member figure.

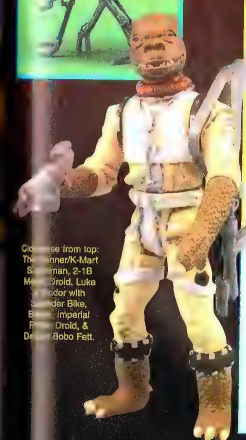
SUPERMAN ANIMATED TO ADD TO LINE

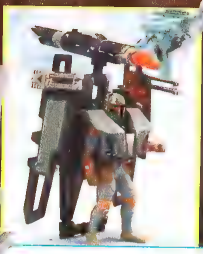
With the success of the first wave of **Superman Animated** figures and the TV show they were based on, Kenner has already announced that it will be adding to the line perhaps as soon as January. Early reports indicate that the first of the new figures will include **Electro Energy Superman**, **Capture Claw Superman**, and **Darkseid**. Future additions to look for include **Supergirl**, **The Flash**, **Fortress of Solitude Superman**, **Metallo**, and **Anti-Kryptonite Superman**.

Additionally for Superman fans, Kenner and K-Mart department stores will soon be releasing a new **12" Superman** figure. The figure will be limited to only 50,000 pieces and be available only at K-Marts across the country. What's more, the figure will come in a special collector's box, reminiscent of the packaging used by Kenner for their **12" Star Wars** line.

STAR WARS '97 PREVIEW

Kenner has already released shots of what they'll be releasing for the Star Wars line new for 1997, and **FAN** is bringing it to you. Releasing around the same time as the theatrical rerelease of *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*, new figures for release include **AT-ST Driver**, **Bossk**, **2-1B Medic Droid**, **Luke in Hoth Gear**, **and Hoth Rebel Soldier**. Additionally, a special **Luke in Endor** Figure will be available with a newly packaged Speeder Bike. This package should be available before any of the movies hit, perhaps as soon as early January. Also in January, collectors can look for the deluxe Imperial Probe Droid and the Deluxe Bobo Fett with Firing Jetpack. These two figures will ship together and be packed much the same as the recent deluxe Star Wars figures.





Clockwise from top: The Kenner/K-Mart Superman, 2-1B Medic Droid, Luke Skywalker with Speeder Bike, Deluxe Imperial Probe Droid, & Deluxe Bobo Fett.

TALES OF TOTAL CHAOS RARITIES

The Total Chaos rarities include, from top right, they come out, as well as the real facts about hard-to-find variations.

McFarlane studios has disclosed news that many of its recently released **Total Chaos** figures shipped with rarer variations of some figures included. **FAN** was informed of these product variations by McFarlane Toys itself, and the list is as follows:

- **Dragon Blade's** outfit was intended to feature a dragon logo stretching from the back to the bottom of the cloth front-piece. Those released with a much smaller dragon, which only covers the torso of the garment, are the rare figures. There have also been additional paint enhancements.
- **Gore** was originally supposed to be much larger than the actual figure turned out to be. Todd McFarlane was not happy with the fact that, due to a production error, the figure was not as large as planned, and for this reason he stopped production on the figure. This is the first time that he's ever done this. He was that upset. There will be no second edition or repaint on this figure, and its slot in the assortment will be filled by a completely new character when the second editions are released. What's out there now is all that there are.
- **Al Simmons** was issued with either black or yellow painted letters identifying him on his armor. The black lettered version is the rarer of the two.
- **Hoot** has been issued with different armor colors. According to McFarlane, the brown armored Hoot is the rare figure.

Again, this information is not just rumor, but the real deal supplied my McFarlane Toys itself. You can count on **FAN** for news on each of McFarlane's toy lines as

MARKET REPORT

by James Bullock

•RECENT TOYS•

KENNER

•G.I. JOE

There are so many store exclusive Joes flooding the market that it's understandably tough to keep up. First we have the Target exclusive **WWII African-American** assortment, which now fetch a steady $25-$30 a piece and $100-$110 a set. Then there's the Target exclusive **Masterpiece** set which sold for such a high dollar ($60 a piece plus tax) that the after-market doesn't have a lot of room for climbing. Most go for $75-ish now. Then there are the FAO Schwartz pieces which are too early to call. Then there is the Wal-Mart **"Home for the Holidays" Joe** which appears to be a good bet fetching $30-$40 quick. These are limited to 50,000 pieces and come in both Caucasian and African-American versions. Then there are the Kay-Bee exclusives and Toys R' Us exclusives, which are still too soon to call. Stay tune

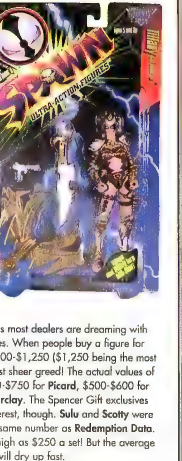
•STAR WARS

The new **Star Wars** releases are getting the most attention am collectors, especially because of the record number of variatio which are already being seen. In the last issue, we reported se eral of the currently known variations, among which was the **H Carbonite** variation: one card reading "Carbonite Freezing Chamber" and the other reading "Carbonite Block." We announced that the former reading "Chamber" was the scarc the two and received quite a bit of feedback from people argu

the opposite. Remember that scarcity is often times a product of regional distribution. **Target Joes**, for example, are much scarcer on the East Coast than the West. So, although they are common in California at and around the release date, they become generally scarce as many make their way east where scarcity is extreme. The same often happens with **Star Wars**. At this point, it is still cult to say which will come out on top. Remember the scenario with the **Maxx**. At first, everyone scrambled for the version with the white Izz. Now, white Izz versions are about half the value of the black.

With the **Luke Jedi**, however, there's not much of a guessing game. The "tan" vest version is by far dominating not only his black vested counterpart but also the entire new release. He leads the way at an easy $25 and should hold on. Also, we goofed slightly last issue. We reported a potential variation in the **Luke Imperial Disguise** staff regarding convex versus concave notches. The variation has been confirmed, but not on the **Imperial Disguise Luke**. It's on the sabre of the **Luke Jedi**. The handle of **Luke** Jedi's lightsaber has two versions. One has notches which stick out like rings, the other has notches which go inward. At this point it is unknown which is tougher. Since this piece also has a vest variation, that works out to four versions of **Luke Jedi** to find. There is a variation on the **Imperial Disguise Luke**, though, with regard to the staff color. One is bluish and the other is more grey. To date, these are the only authenticated reports of variations, as if this isn't enough! Stay tuned. If any more pop up we'll let you know.

Among non-variation figures, most are going for $6-$8 except for **Han Carbonite**, which goes for at least $10 regardless which version you're talking about. The **Leia Boushh** is getting $12-$15 despite the fact that she's just as common as the rest. Need I tell you why? Also, the **Deluxe** assortment of figures is out, and despite fans seeming generally displeased with the cheesiness, they are selling well. The big news is with the 12 inch line. With the release of the newest 12 inchers on the horizon, the first four are selling quite briskly since people want to get them before it's too late. Some, however, are paying WAY too much! **Ben**, for example, is NOT a $100+ piece! $40-$45 is ok, but people that pay above $50 are going to be very disappointed when the actual value of this piece never ascends past that point. **Ben** is following the **Malebolgia** pattern of last year. It comes out very short, people pay too much and it takes over a year for the value to finally catch up with what they paid. Bottom line, stay patient. For every one for sale at $60 is another for $30-$35. The current average is about $40-$45. Then, **Luke** is $30-$35 and **Han** and **Vader** are $25-$30.



MCFARLANE TOYS

The current hot **Spawn** pieces seem to be **Tiffany**, **Blood Queen**, **Thresher**, **Widow Maker** ($12-$16 a piece) and the FAO Schwartz exclusive **Maxx**. This piece is at $25-$30 currently. Also, **Malebolgia** is back up to $50-ish. This figure has yo-yoed quite a bit since its release but should stay here for a while.

PLAYMATES

Star Trek is suffering slightly as most dealers are dreaming with their prices on the **1701** figures. When people buy a figure for $5 and put a price on it of $800-$1,250 ($1,250 being the most ridiculously high price!), it's just sheer greed! The actual values of these figures are around $600-$750 for **Picard**, $500-$600 for **Tasha**, and $300-$350 for **Barclay**. The Spencer Gift exclusives are sparking quite a bit of interest, though. **Sulu** and **Scotty** were limited to 10,000 apiece, the same number as **Redemption Data**. Sales have been reported as high as $250 a set! But the average is around $75 apiece. These will dry up fast.

The 9 inch line is doing very well among collectors. Many overlooked this line, yet the pieces are rather limited, especially relative to the 5 inchers that run into the hundreds of thousands. Watch for these figures to be major sleepers and outlast their smaller counterparts in after-market demand and value. The Target exclusive 9" **Spock**, **Kirk**, **Sulu** and **Scotty** are already scorching!

•NOT-SO-RECENT TOYS•

KENNER/HASBRO

•BATMAN

We moved **Batman Animated** into this category since, although **Batman** figures are still coming out in toys stores, the figures with after-market value that we deal with are up to four years old. Yep, 1997 is just around the corner and **BTAS** hit in 1992. The **Penguin** is still a super hot piece, although they are showing up for sale more often and price averages are down a bit to $65-$80. **The Riddler** too, which was going for up to $50 at one time, has settled down at $30-$45. **Poison Ivy** is on the rise, though, reaching the $30 mark. Also on the rise are **Combat Belt Batman** ($40) and **Turbo-Jet: Batman** ($25). Most other **Animated** figures and vehicles sell well when priced to move.

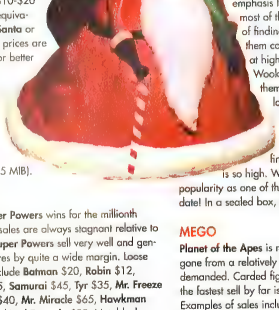
•G.I. JOE

3 3/4 inch **Joes** are tough sells loose unless they are complete with all accessories and file card. Everyone and his brother has 100s of loose figures sitting around for sale at $1-$3 a piece with only some or no weapons. Some, however, are trying

to get top dollar for loose figures and it's just not going to happen. The demand is there, but supply is overwhelming! Sales among loose, complete NM figures with file card include (among 1982 straight arms) **Scarlett** $25, **Snake Eyes** $28, **Stalker** $20 and **Cobra Commander** (first version) $75. Among figure sales mint in the mailer bag with file cards are **Snake Eyes** $45, **Scarlett** $45, **Storm Shadow** $35, **Firefly** $26 and **Hawk** $20. MOC sales include 1983 **Scarlett** C9 $135, **Snowjob** C8 $55, **Major Bludd** C9+ $70, **Destro** C9 $75, **Duke** C9+U $70, **Snake Eyes with Timber** C1OU $135, and **Trip Wire** C9 $55.

•NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS

Nightmare Before Christmas is outrageously hot! No reasonably priced figure takes more than a week to sell, loose or MIP. The top pieces of the line like the large **Sally** ($500 MIB) and the **Applause Jack** and **Sally in Coffins** ($600 for the set MIB with banners) are actually slow, perhaps due to their higher price, while people devote attention to completing the lower end of the collection. Loose figure sales are up again and include **Jack as Santa** ($15), **Behemoth** ($25), **Werewolf** ($25), **Jack** ($40), **Sally** ($45), **Mayor** ($45), **Evil Scientist** ($40), **Santa** ($75), **Oogie Boogie** ($75) and **Lock, Shock and Barrel** ($75 for the set). All prices are for complete figures with accessories and tombstones. MOC sell instantly in nice shape. But, because the cards are so easily damaged, finding "nice cards" is tougher than it sounds. Plus, there is a notable difference between first and second series cards. The first series cards have the accessories on a plastic bracket (tree) behind the figure, whereas the second release cards display the accessories to the right of the figure. The first series cards demand, on average, $10-$20 more than the second series equivalents. This does not apply to **Santa** or **Oogie**, though. The following prices are for small figures mint on C8 or better second series cards: **Jack as Santa** ($35), **Behemoth** ($50), **Werewolf** ($55), **Jack Skellington** ($75), **Evil Scientist** ($80), **Sally** ($85), **Mayor** ($85), **Santa** ($150), **Oogie Boogie** ($175) and **Lock, Shock and Barrel** ($175 MIB).



•SUPER POWERS

Among superhero lines, **Super Powers** wins for the millionth straight month. **Secret Wars** sales are always stagnant relative to their DC opponents. Loose **Super Powers** sell very well and generally outsell the carded figures by quite a wide margin. Loose NM complete figure sales include **Batman** $20, **Robin** $12, **Superman** $15, **Dr. Fate** $25, **Samurai** $45, **Tyr** $35, **Mr. Freeze** $30, **Orion** $25, **Cyclotron** $40, **Mr. Miracle** $65, **Hawkman** $20, **Green Lantern** $25, and **Red Tornado** $22. Notably, loose figures command a premium when they include the mini-comic book that was packaged with them.

•NOT-AT-ALL RECENT TOYS•

KENNER

•INDIANA JONES

Indiana Jones has had a comparably large boost in demand over the past several months. The original 3 3/4 inch **Indy** with whip, which used to be a tough sell at $125 MOC, now gets a quick $150 on C1OU cards. **Marion** is pretty slow, but **Mola Rom** and **Thugee** are an easy $75 MOC. Loose, the figures go for slightly more than half the MOC price when complete. The 12 inch **Indy** disappears when sealed, C9 or better box ($250-$275) and loose complete NM ($100).

•STAR WARS

We won't bore you by telling you about how popular *Star Wars* toys are and how quickly the prices are skyrocketing. It's the same every month. The only difference are the prices. Many loose, complete figure prices are on the way up, including **Cloud Car Pilot** $20, **Yoda**—brown snake $30 and orange $22, **Luke** original with brown hair $35 and blonde $25, **Original Han** with large head $22 and small head $35, **R5-D4, R2-D2** (original) and **Power Droid** all fetch $15 apiece with nice stickers. The biggest loose piece in the line is **Blue Snaggletooth** which sells for hundreds overseas. Here in the states, a truly mint example of the figure with no paint scuffing on the boots sells for a quick $150 and has gone for as high as $175. The average C9 **Blue Snag** gets $125-$135. This figure could hit $200 in no time.

12 inch figures have been steadily on the rise as well. Sales of loose complete NM figures include **Chewy** $75, **Vader** $85, **Boba Fett** $185, **Han Solo** $195, **Luke** $145, **Leia** $80, **R2-D2** $55, **C3PO** $55, **Ben Kenobi** $150, **Stormtrooper** $100, **Jawa** $90, and **IG-88** $325. The emphasis here is on the completeness. The prices on most of these pieces are based not on the difficulty of finding them but, rather, the difficulty of finding them complete. Loose 12 inch parts sell very well at higher prices than you'd think. Boba Fett's Wookie scalps, for example, sell quickly by themselves for $40 in nice shape. Another loose gem is the Solo medallion. Fakes are being mass produced, but a nice original would fetch $50 easy! **IG-88**'s bandalier and grenades are next to impossible to find loose, which is why the complete figure is so high. Well, that combined with his scarcity and popularity as one of the single coolest **Star Wars** figures made to date! In a sealed box, this piece has gone as high as $700.

MEGO

Planet of the Apes is red hot! Within the last year, **POTA** has gone from a relatively ignored line to one which is fanatically demanded. Carded figures sell very well when on mint cards, but the fastest sell by far is a loose complete NM figure or playset. Examples of sales include (all loose, complete and NM) **Urko** $80, **Ursus** $80, **Soldier Ape** $65, **Dr. Zauis** $55, **Zira** $55, **Cornelius** $55, **Galen** $55, **Verdan** $60, **Burke** $60, and **Astronaut** (cloth belt) $100 (plastic belt) $90. These are not rare prices, they reflect the going rate for these figures.

TOMY

A major sleeper line for years and years is finally starting to gain authority. **Tron** figures and vehicles have always been very tough finds in any shape, but with next to no interested buyers, the short supply didn't really matter. But now everyone's looking for them and the prices of the few available pieces are demonstrating the competing demand. The line came with four figures (**Tron**, **Flynn**, **Sark** and **Warrior**) and two **Light Cycles** (yellow and orange/red). All figures came with a disc which attached to their back except for the **Warrior**, who came with a staff. Prices are currently as follows: **Tron** (loose $40, MOC $100), **Flynn** (loose $30, MOC $75), **Sark** (loose $25, MOC $60), **Warrior** (loose $25, MOC $60), and the **Light Cycles** (loose $40, MIB $75-$100) The **Light Cycles** came packaged with rip-cords to make them run, so loose examples without the cord go for about $10-$15 less. If you think these prices are high, check back in a few months and see where they are. This line is going nowhere but up unless someone stumbles upon a warehouse stash which is pretty unlikely. F

TOP 10 NEW TOYS

10. LEIA IN BOUSHH [illegible]

SW: SOTE
$12-15
Still hanging in there and in [illegible] any Boushhs figure collectors seem to want.

9. STAR [illegible]

SW:POTF2
$12-$20 [illegible]
The fi[illegible] figures are out, and despite their cheapness, people are picking them up now.

8. FAO SCHWARTZ EXCLUSIVE MIB

Spawn
$20-$25
This exclusive is very popular and already rookie to find on [illegible]

7. 12 INCH MEN [illegible]

SW:POTF2
$40-$50
The toughest of the three main figures overseas to hold to scalpers up before the next assortment hits.

6. KAY-BEE AIRBORNE MIB G.I. JOES

$40-$60
All three versions of this figure are the hot this month. This should change soon, though, as others [illegible] take the toys R' us pieces which are on the way.

5. STAR TREK [illegible] SET

$90-$115
Huge crossover piece sought after by Trekkies for grossness.

3 and 4. SPENCER GIFTS SULU AND SCOTTY

Star Trek
$75 to $100 apiece
Designed as Spencer's exclusive convention pieces (see **FAN** #18), these two are selling for well above their original retail of $15 each. And they should continue to climb!

2. [illegible] INCH MAN SPACE SUIT [illegible]

Warlord Star Trek Exclusives
$40-$45 each
Maybe even better than their 6 [illegible] cousins to the back on. They're red-hot now, though!

1. LUKE JEDI KNIGHT TAN VESTED VERSION

SW: POTF2
$25-$30
People are going nuts trying to get the very short reverse-tan [illegible] Luke Jedi. What's out there is all there will be all, so it should go even [illegible]

bena's geek corner

DONNY & MARIE OSMOND Musical
1976

She's a little bit country, and he's a little bit rock 'n' roll. And together, these dolls are a little bit collectible. THE entertainment family of the '70s, the Osmonds are currently little more than just a music/television footnote. Here, the brother and sister team of Donny & Marie are immortalized in posterable plastic. Due to their current relative popular obscurity, [illegible] was the first time you saw an Osmond video on MTV), these figures can be had quite cheaply (in this case, a friend cut his grandmother's grass for these—it seems she collects old dolls). However, for those of us who remember watching their variety show with glee, these figures are priceless.

Playmates® & Captain Picard's FAN

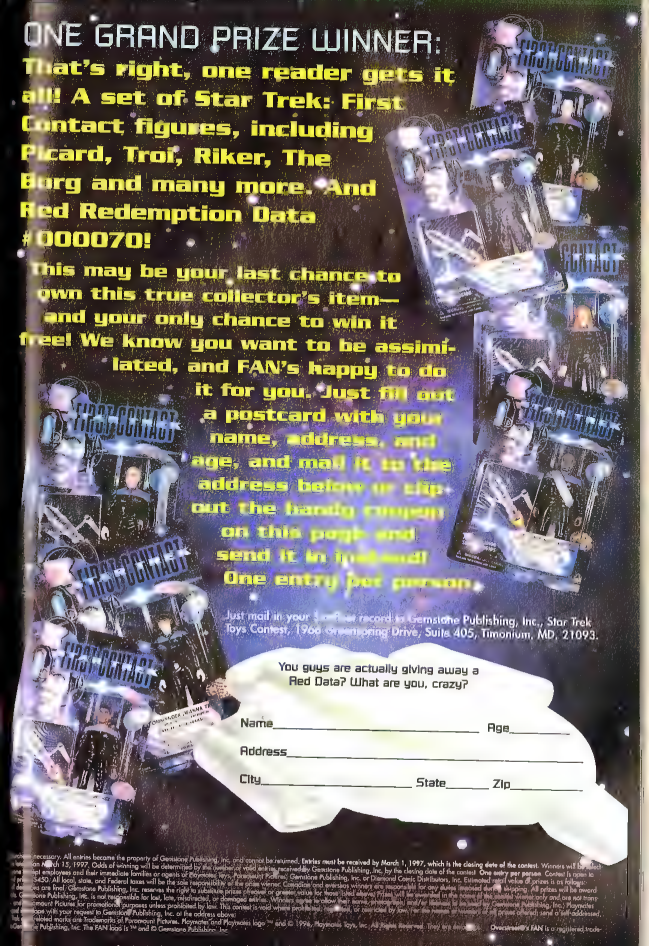
WANT TO DELIVER THE BORG STRAIGHT TO YOU!

If you're the winner of our exclusive Star Trek Playmates Toys Contest, not only will you receive a set of Star Trek: First Contact figures, but one of the hottest action figures ever made, a Red Redemption Data!

ONE GRAND PRIZE WINNER:

That's right, one reader gets it all! A set of Star Trek: First Contact figures, including Picard, Troi, Riker, The Borg and many more. And Red Redemption Data #000070!

This may be your last chance to own this true collector's item—and your only chance to win it free! We know you want to be assimilated, and FAN's happy to do it for you. Just fill out a postcard with your name, address, and age, and mail it to the address below or clip out the handy coupon on this page and send it in instead! One entry per person.



Just mail in your favorite record to Gemstone Publishing, Inc., Star Trek Toys Contest, 1966 Greenspring Drive, Suite 405, Timonium, MD, 21093.

You guys are actually giving away a Red Data? What are you, crazy?

Name_____ Age_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

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DRASTIC PLASTIC

by Clay Boy

FROM THE TOP...

Welcome to the first installment of **Drastic Plastic**. Every month I'll take a look at the growing hobby of plastic figure models, giving you reviews, info on new releases, and hints on how to build and paint your new acquisitions. This month, as an introduction, we thought we'd give you a little background on the types of kits we'll be covering in the future.

Let's set the wayback machine for, oh, say 1950. That's about when the first plastic models started appearing. No, it's not an exact date, but it's nice and round, it'll have to do. Anyway, all they had back then were the standard airplane and car models, not much different than the ones you can get at any corner drugstore today. Then a little company called Aurora got involved somehow, apparently spurred on by the idea that somebody might buy a model of something besides an inanimate Panzer tank. During its reign, Aurora produced a wide range of movie monster kits (including all the classic Universal monsters), comic superheroes, dinosaurs, Star Trek characters, etc. Aurora finally went out of business in 1977, leaving a major void in the industry. Sure, the other big companies made figure kits here and there, but not with anywhere near the spirit or volume of Aurora. After a few years, the modelers got tired of waiting for the big companies to get their stuff together and took to the garage.

Graveyard by Screamline.

RESIN GARAGE KITS

Talk about a grass-roots beginning! Some creative modeler-types started to get impatient about buying models of their favorite comic characters and movie monsters, so they started sculpting their own darn things themselves. Using the same technologies employed in making prototypes for manufacturing, these home-grown modelers began to reproduce their own work. The idea was to make the sculpture, break it up into its simplest parts and then make a flexible mold from silicone rubber. Later, the mold would be filled with urethane resin, and viola! Your very own model. The whole process was simple enough to do in one's own garage. And the great thing about these models was that the flexible molds could hold a LOT more detail than the old, rigid molds of old. Kit sculptors went crazy trying to one-up each others work in terms of pose and detail.

RESIN vs. VINYL

These days, models come in three main categories: resin, soft vinyl and plain old plastic. Resin kits are generally the most expensive, but you can find just about any character you can possibly imagine in resin. You want a Predator? No problem. Chun Li from Street Fighter? No problem. The third creature from the left standing against the wall in the background at the Mos Eisley Cantina? You'll probably find it. Because the rubber molds are less expensive than metal, the companies don't have to count on selling fifty thousand kits, so they can afford to be about as esoteric as they want. The trouble is, the molds don't last very long, the resin is expensive, and each casting has to be hand-poured so that's where the cost comes in. Still, it's really hard to beat the sharp complexity of pose and detail available in resin.

Artomic Creations has a line of gothic horror film characters that come about as close to being human as a twelve inch figure can get! Especially nice is the Nosferatu from the silent film

...spookyl Cellar ... has produced a ... remarkably ... figures based on ... Vallejo's classic ... paintings, "Primeval ... Princess" and ... Amazon's Pet." ... just something ... tough girl with ... ...Grey Zon ... ...ses in creating ... skulls of popu... creatures. ... but their giant ... morph queen skull, two feet long! Streamline Pictures ... ...e of daring models such as Heavy Metal: ...'s Embrace, (featuring a woman welder in, shall ... ...a compromising position with her current work) ... ...eyard (a prickly fellow from the minds of Simon ... and Kevin Eastman). Dark Horse has a long history ... ...n resin, now punctuated by kits straight from the ... their own Rusty and the Big Guy and Hard ... Monsters in Motion has commissioned an extensive line of film subjects, including the hot new Pamela Lee "Barb Wire" kit: big, beautiful, and a dead-on likeness to boot.

Soft vinyl kits have made a big impact in the past few years. These are made of a hollow rubbery stuff which feels a little like a fake leather recliner. Technically, these are not vintage kits in the truest sense of the term, because of the more "industrial" nature of creating metal molds. The castings are made by coating the inside of the mold with a thin layer of molten vinyl, then pouring out the excess, leaving a hollow reproduction of the part. Also, the selection is a bit more limited, but there's plenty out there to keep the majority of us happy! Horizon has an expansive line of Marvel and DC heroes (some vinyl, some resin), including an amazing Superman Steel kit (tough to find now!) and a very sexy Catwoman. Geometric specializes in high quality horror subjects like the superb Pumpkinhead Metamorphosis, and a picture perfect Medusa from *Clash of the Titans*. Sideshow Productions has gotten a lot of press lately, and deservedly so (one look at the new, Bernie Wrightson Frankenstein diorama—lavingly detailed down to the last bit of gory goo on the floors—and you'll see why).

B & K Models' Geura Doga from Gundam.

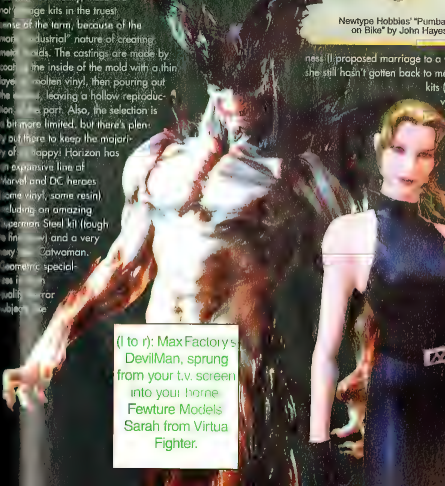
THE JAPANESE FACTOR

With the influx of Japanese anime films in America, it only makes sense that the models should be hot on their heels. Max Factory's vinyl Guyver kits (especially the small, pre-painted ones) are every where. Wave specializes in maniacally detailed resin kits of popular robotics (or mecha) such as Macross and Gundam. Fewture has a good selection of terrible (the good kind of terrible) mutated creatures. Who could dream up such twisted stuff as the Pusher Hopper, Nina Dolano or Vampo? Volks' line of 1/4 scale Sorayama figures have to be some of the finest sculptures ever created: stirring, anatomically perfect and polished to razor smooth

Newtype Hobbies' "Pumba Girl on Bike" by John Hayes.

ness (I proposed marriage to a Cutey Honey the other day, but she still hasn't gotten back to me). Street Fighter and Darkstalkers kits (based on the popular Capcom video games) are big sellers in the states. In fact, the whole Japanese scene is so popular here that some US companies have even started releasing their own models from Japanese animation and manga. Take a look at Streamline Pictures' Guy and Robot Carnival line, and Newtype Hobby's Puma Girl on Bike from Dominion.

Yes, it's come a long way from Grampa's schooner in a bottle, and I, for one, couldn't be happier. Check back with us next month when we'll have some in depth reviews of current kits, as well as some hobby tips.

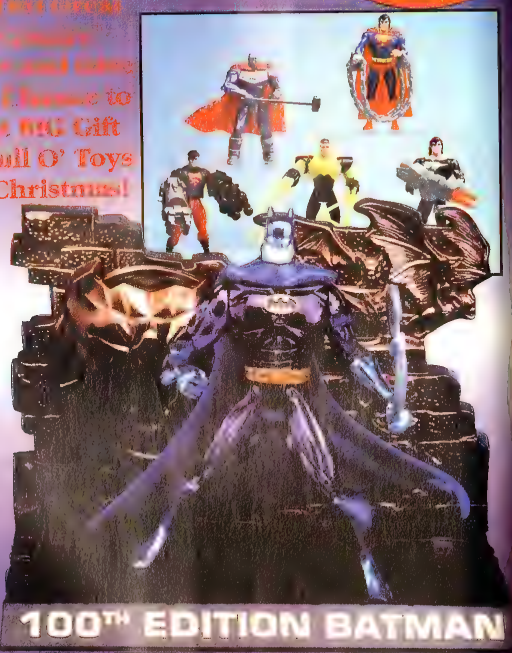


(l to r): Max Factory's DevilMan, sprung from your t.v. screen into your home. Fewture Models' Sarah from Virtua Fighter.

Kenner AND FAN

OVERSTREET

Blast Your Friends! DC Comics' Deadly and Toxic Foes Are Your Chance to Win a BIG Gift Box Full O' Toys This Christmas!



In the spirit of the season, Kenner has put together five huge special packages of BATMAN™ and SUPERMAN™ toys for FAN to give away to you! These include some of Kenner's most popular toys from '96—the stuff you wanted all year—*and* new stuff for '97! This is a great package of toys too big to fit under any tree!

Grand Prize: Five Winners will each receive 3 Batman™: Total Justice™ figures, 5 Superman™: Man of Steel™ figures, a 100th Edition Batman™ figure, 3 NEWLY RELEASED Batman™ D.U.O. Force™ figures, a set of NEWLY RELEASED Microverse Batman™ and Robin™ Animated Figures Rogue's Gallery Micro Figures, and a NEWLY RELEASED Microverse Superman Lexo-Skel-5,000™ vs. Kryptonian Battlesuit™ set, and a NEWLY RELEASED Microverse Metropolis™ City Micro Playset.

That's right, if you're one of the five winners selected, you get a full package of all the good stuff from Kenner! Just mail in a post card with your name, address, and age or the coupon on this page to the address below and you could win!

Send to Gemstone Publishing, Inc., Big Box of Toys Contest, 1966 Greenspring Drive, Suite 405, Timonium, MD, 21093.

No, I haven't grown up—I still like getting toys for Christmas!

Name_____ Age_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

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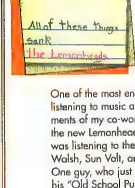
PSYCHOTIC reactions



CAR BUTTO CLOTH
THE LEMON-HEADS
Atlantic

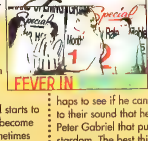
One of the most enjoyable things about listening to music at the office is the comments of my co-workers. When I put in the new Lemonheads, I was asked if I was listening to the Eagles (ha!), Joe Walsh, Sun Volt, and Lynyrd Skynyrd. One guy, who just can't seem to see past his "Old School Punk Rock" blinders even commented, "Y'know, you're part of the problem." (That person is the same that used the phrase "the power and fury of youth" in one of his record reviews this issue—so you know where he's coming from.) Now I'll be the first to admit I'm a sucker for a well-crafted pop tune. A well written hook, the kind that gets into your head and eats away at your brain until there is nothing left but the song, is a rare thing. And Evan Dando has, in the past, delivered such hooks. On **Car Button Cloth**, he starts out in the right direction with "It's All True" and "If I Could Talk I'd Tell You." But by the third track, it all starts to sound too familiar as the songs become mind-numbingly repetitious. Sometimes one of the problems of finding a great hook is the tendency to play it over and over again. There are a few better moments here and there on the album, but nothing, after the first two tracks, to go around and hum to yourself all day.

—Benn Ray

II THE PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Columbia

Ok, so this band has very little indy cred. And yes, I fell for their instrument gimmick (a 3-string guitar, a 2-string bass, etc.) with the same fervor that I fell for Taco Bell's Double-Decker Taco gimmick. But I still argue that the Presidents' first album was a clever and witty exploration of pop-rock. Their use of sexual innuendo and double entendre was so slick most people didn't even get it, but then again most people get very little. And this album does have its moments ("Volcano" is about as explicit as you can get on FM radio without censure). There's even some good ol' '70s rock riffs scattered throughout. However, the joke is wearing thin on their second release. The quirky, goofball subject matter and presentation has lost that fresh feeling. Maybe it's time these guys got some more strings and started playing Aerosmith covers.

—Benn Ray



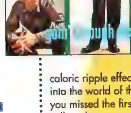
FEVER IN FEVER OUT
LUSCIOUS JACKSON
Grand Royal

This time out, Luscious Jackson has brought on big-time producer Daniel Lanois, perhaps to see if he can lend the sort of tone to their sound that he once lent U2 and Peter Gabriel that pushed them to superstardom. The best thing is, he doesn't really succeed. It's a tremendously well-produced album, don't get me wrong, but where Lanois redefined the sound of both Gabriel and U2, Luscious Jackson still ends up just sounding like a slightly more polished version of themselves. The first single, the hypnotic, dizzy "Naked Eye," starts off the CD and lets you know this one's a keeper. Still in a category by themselves, Luscious Jackson move all over the map musically, from the dance-infected, brilliant "Skin Deep" to the smooth, seductive "Stardust." Jill Cunniff's bass and Kate Schellenbach's drums propel the whole thing while Cunniff and guitarist Gabrielle Glaser's voices set the mood beautifully. **Fever In Fever Out** is not as tight as **Where's Manny?**, their first EP, but it solidifies them as one of the best bands currently working in music.

—Christopher Woodward

GOIN' THROUGH CHANGES
ZUMPANO
Sub Pop

As the song by Black Sabbath by the same name as Zumpano's album goes, Ozzy is changing. Zumpano is not. The 1995 release by these wacky Canadian punks-turned-Joe Meek-ster (AKA 60s British pop-sters) finds them retreading their way. A sound so classic it was hard to forge the feeling th tunes left in their sugary wake. Now t



caloric ripple effect has floated Zumpo into the world of the sophmoric slump. you missed the first one, the second o will work.

—S. Leonard Hec

HANDSOME
HANDSOME
Epic

Pulled together by the former Helmet g tarist Peter Mengede, Handsome is a roaring five-piece pop band that just might catch on. This band sounds simi to a lot of the stuff that was turning up the early to mid-eighties in this country when new American rock bands were trying to capitalize on the success of t Sex Pistols and The Clash. Now we've got bands like Filter and Prick trying t capitalize on the success of Nine Inch Nails. And now we've got Handsome, which seems to be cashing in on the moderate success of Filter, which isn't necessarily a bad thing. Like Filter, the music's got a lot of layers to it, though Handsome isn't near as ragged and r far more pop than industrial. "Going Panic" is the most impressive of the batch, showcasing some strong chorc changes and well-executed song struc tures. Imagine The Outfield as redefin by Trent Reznor and you get the pictu hate it when reviewers do that old "i cross between This and That" thing.

—Christopher Woodw

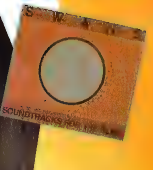
SOUNDTRACKS FOR THE BLIND

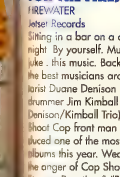
SWANS

Mordisvic

Soundtracks marks the end of one of the most interesting collaborations in music. Soundtracks is also the Swans' most ambitious release, combining "found sounds," traditional instrumentation, dark lyrics, and soaring voices. From their noisy beginnings to their grand musical pretension and power, Swans have held their own and defined their sound. The sound carries the grace of age with the power and fury of youth. Lyrically, Michael Gira lulls with tales of sex, greed, and death. Jarboe echoes Gira's lyrics with a voice bordering between operatic and rage-filled. This last double album effort captures all that made Swans so interesting for so many years.

Soundtracks offers those not familiar with Swans to examine the unconventional way that an artist may choose to present their music. Every track here is an interesting excursion into a world not unlike our own; step in, examine your own mortality, and enjoy.—Joseph P. Rybandt





GET OFF THE CROSS (WE NEED THE WOOD

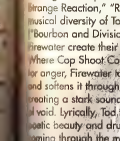
FOR THE FIRE)

FIREWATER

Jetset Records

Sitting in a bar on a cold November night. By yourself. Music on the juke . this music. Backed by some of the best musicians around, namely guitarist Duane Denison (Jesus Lizard) and drummer Jim Kimball (Mule, Denison/Kimball Trio), former Cop Shoot Cop front man Tod A. has produced one of the most interesting albums this year. Weaving in-between the anger of Cop Shoot Cop ("Some Strange Resention," "Refinery") and the musical diversity of Tom Waits ("Bourbon and Division," "Balallaika"), Firewater create their own sound. Where Cop Shoot Cop was a vehicle for anger, Firewater takes that anger and softens it through cello and violin, creating a stark sound of the emotional void. Lyrically, Tod tells stories of poetic beauty and drunken anger, coming through the music as a man who's been there...and lived to tell the tale. Enough words. Back to the bar. Back to your third shot of cheap whiskey. Back to the music...this music

—Joseph P. Rybandt



LA TRAGEDIE D'ORESTE ET ELECTRE

CRANES

Dedicated

Candles lit. One by one. Not what I was expecting after the brilliant **Loved**, but life is full of change. Inspired by the play *Les Mouches* (*The Flies*) by Jean-Paul Sartre, with lyrics spoken/sung exclusively in French, **La Tragedie** is not an easy album. Go back to **Loved** if you want easy access into Cranes; enjoy this album as a work of art and sound. The traditional song structure is thrown out, with sounds entering and leaving at will. The child-like qualities of Alison Shaw's beautiful voice are in perfect form, with the music providing the perfect back-drop and atmosphere. With the work of **La Tragedie** out of their system, my hope is that Cranes go back to the work they were pursuing with **Loved**. While the album is beautiful, I want the guitar and the beat bouncing through my head. Candles out. One by one.

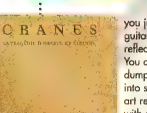
—Joseph P. Rybandt

THE MORAY EELS EAT THE SPACE NEEDLE

SPACE NEEDLE

Zero Hour

Lo-fi. Could you call it a movement just yet? It's too early to tell. Is it a trend? Thankfully, not enough bands are on that wagon. Years ago, one of the things that made rock 'n' roll so revolutionary was that anyone could do it.



You didn't need to spend years in a school studying music so that one day you could get a shot at a chair in some stuffy European symphony. If you wanted to play, you just picked up a guitar. Lo-fi recording reflects this attitude. You don't need to dump a lot of bucks into some state-of-the-art recording studio with some big-shot producer like Steve Albini turning the knobs for you to make a record. You just have to do what this suburban basement band does: wait for mom and dad to go out, invite the guys in the band over, go downstairs, and start playing. The result is a unique sound that adds an otherwise unattainable texture to your music. In Space Needle's case, the texture helps to layer their experimental, free-form, noise-rock, jazz. Is this album the best argument for the lo-fi sound? No. However, **The Moray Eels Eat the Space Needle** has moments where it does prove certain points of the argument

—Benn Ray

FAN takes a look at some cool boxed CD sets you might've overlooked. And it's just in time for the gift giving season too.

SPACE BOX/ 'OTO & BEYOND

Cleopatra

Turn on the blacklight and fire up the bong 'cuz we're heading on an odyssey of cosmic proportions, baby! It's all here; every tripped-out, warped-out, psyched-out sound that encapsulates the space sound of rock. As varied forms of 'space rock' make their way back into the collective consciousness of the world, it pays to look at what started it all. This extensive and varied collection presents some of the finest from the past to the future and all points between. All manner of artist are represented here: Hawkwind, Pressurehed, Chrome, Helios Creed, Nik Turner, Anubian Lights...and beyond. Unlike most box sets, this work allows you to explore the music and the theme without an over-wrought biography/explanation of the genre. The ultimate set for the beginner or the expert. Cleopatra continues their excellent work in collecting the more eclectic music available. My head still pounds and my eyes are still tuned to the cosmos after the three discs with over three hours of listening. If only this set could have explained why Spacehog are so popular.

—Joseph P. Rybandt

CHROME BOX

Cleopatra

A lot of revolutionary bands emerged in the late '70s. None, however, sounded like Chrome. They were the definition of musical pioneering. The late [illegible] got Chrome together, but it was a combination of Edge and Helios Creed that [illegible] Chrome [illegible] The sound is [illegible] and [illegible] again in this amazing box set. Over [illegible] of music [illegible] fifteen releases are covered in this be-all/end-all [illegible] sound [illegible] cool [illegible] guitar noise, sounds of the future, and [illegible]. As the mid-eighties approached, Creed & Edge [illegible] Chrome parting to begin [illegible] solo ventures through music, a venture worth following as well. My first contact with Chrome came in the form of a single released by the Jesus Lizard. In the song they paid homage to this remarkable band. From there, I was off, picking up any and all Chrome I could find; now with this collection the search is over...nothing more is needed.

—Joseph P. Rybandt

TOP 5 FAVES O' THE YEAR

(l-r) The Monsters of Rock—Benn Ray, S. Leonard Hedeen, Joseph P. Rybandt

FAN's regular music critics pick their top 5 records of 1996. If you haven't checked out any of this music already, you really should immediately.

S. LEONARD HEDEEN

AMAZING DISCRACE
THE POSIES
DGC
Power pop out the wahzoo. Cheap Trick and The Raspberries are alive in the guise of some indie nerds.

SCARED STRAIGHT
THE NEW BOMB TURKS
Epitaph
Hitting all the punk rock tributes so hard that they become their own, the New Bomb Turks bring it all home

UNDER THE BUSHES, UNDER THE STARS
GUIDED BY VOICES
Matador
The lo-fi pop is now med-fi rock and the tunes have gotten even better. Here's a band that releases a great record, then its main members release two solo albums that are as good as the main album...too good to be wrong.

RECORDS
THE WRENS
Grass
Twisting together the best of ten styles, New Jersey's best act in years release the best album of 1996 that you didn't hear.

BR5-49
BR5-49
Arista
Taking its name from Jr. Samples' used car lot, Nashville will drop the lame-o '70s tribute acts and listen to the band that knows why George Jones is crying.

BENN RAY

UNDER THE BUSHES, UNDER THE STARS
GUIDED BY VOICES
Matador
Ah, the sweet soothing sounds of lo-fi indie-rock. Without a doubt, the best album of the year. GBV handles their Beatles influences far more creatively than most British bands like Oasis.

AIN'T MY LOOKOUT
THE GRIFTERS
Sub Pop
A veritable cornucopia of sounds and structures. Any album that opens up with the line "This one is for the ladies," and then later longingly croons "Oh, to be the sunshine on your ass" is definitely worth a listen, and this one is worth many.

ODELAY
BECK!
DGC
Quirky, folk, bluegrass rap that breathes new life into a stagnant genre.

"HERESY"
SEBADOH
Sub Pop
Lou Barlow has finally exercised just the right amount of restraint when blending bittersweet, broken-hearted songs with angst-ridden hostility. Somebody give him a hug.

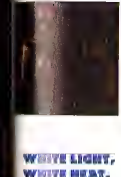
LE GOLEM

COUNTRY CLASSICS
WEEN
Elektra
There are two types of people in the world: Those who get Ween and those who don't. I feel pity for those who don't. It's an appropriate commentary on the country music industry that the best country album to come out in years is not by a country band.

JOSEPH P. RYBANDT

BLASTRO-MAN
THE LEE HARVEY OSWALD BAND
Touch & Go
The rockin'est good time to be had in music this year.

EXPERIMENT ZERO MAN...OR ASTRO-MAN?
Touch & Go
Continuing the excellence begun with previous releases, this album is a pinnacle for them at this point.



THE PROCESS
SKINNY PUPPY
American Recordings
Sad that it's all over, but happy they went out with some of their finest, most exper imental work.

WHITE LIGHT, WHITE HEAT, WHITE TRASH
SOCIAL DISTORTION
Epic
Show 'em how it's done boys!

ENTROPY
ARCWELDER
Touch & Go
The greatest album I heard this year that I didn't review.

CHRISTOPHER WOODWARD
SALT PETER
RUBY
Work Records
Once in a while, an album comes along that changes everything. This is one of them, blending dance, ethereal, and industrial into the sexiest, smartest music this year.

DANCE HALL AT LOUSE POINT
JOHN PARRISH AND POLLY JEAN HARVEY
Island
At times fragile, at other times muscular and raging, this is an album that nearly defies description. PJ Harvey and John Parrish are doing things with music that you really can't afford to miss.

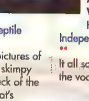
SNAPSHOT RADIO
LOIS
K Records
It's only an EP, but it's phenomenal. Earthy, trembling harmonies and textured guitar work combine in a way that seems to speak in a new musical language.

MELTING IN THE DARK
STEVE WYNN
Zero Hour
You may have thought the new REM album was great, but this is what American music's all about. The title track is enough to make you want to listen to nothing else for days.

STAGE DIVING
PETER HIMMELMAN
Plump Records
The most underrated man in music, this live CD is as good, if not better, than his best studio stuff. And if you've never seen him live, run to the venue the next time he's in town.

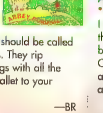
THE SHORT SET

Warning: Repeated listenings can cause you to see a cartoon cat chase a cartoon mouse
—BR

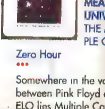


A TASTE FOR BITTERS
CHOKEBORE
Amphetamine Reptile
**
I really like the pictures of the chicks in the skimpy bikinis on the back of the CD case—but that's about it. They sound like a more indie Bush.
—JPR

A FASCINATION WITH HEIGHTS
HALF STRING
Independent Project Records
**
It all sounded very nice until the vocals began.
—JPR



ABBEY ROADKILL
LOS ASS-DRAGGERS
Crypt Records
**1/2
This power-trio should be called Los Ass-Haulers. They rip through 21 songs with all the delicacy of a mallet to your face
—BR



"TERRITORY" SHALL MEAN THE UNIVERSE
THE MULTIPLE CAT
Zero Hour
***
Somewhere in the void between Pink Floyd and ELO lies Multiple Cat, a conglomeration band with circulating membership.
—BR

"MANHATTAN MINUET"
THE BEAUHUNKS
Basta
****
The Beauhunks cover Raymond Scott, a jazz pioneer whose tunes have populated cartoons from *Ren & Stimpy* to *Looney Tunes*. This disc, complete with Chris (**Acme Novelty Library**) Ware's stylistic design work, is available in this country only through Fantagraphics.

BEAUTIFUL FREAK
EELS
Dreamworks
***
Some of the most annoyingly different songs I have heard in awhile. That "Novacaine" song that's all over the radio is actually a good song, and the Eels aren't really a rock band...they're a group of slimy snake-like fish...wait a minute...it's the other way around.
—SLH

GUITAR SLINGER
THE BRIAN SETZER ORCHESTRA
Interscope
***1/2
Finally dropping the Sha

Na Na stigma of the Stray Cats, Setzer whips Gene Pitney's whine into a Sinatra at the Sands and tells Dom and Burt to go get their own schtik! "Go Cat Go" and all that hokey rock-a-billy lingo daddy-O!!!
—SLH

SUSTAIN
TONE THE GUITAR ENSEMBLE
Dischord/Independent Project Records
***1/2
A project that puts this many guitarists together is bound to get a little repetitive, but still highly listenable.
—JPR

AMREP EQUIPPED
VARIOUS
Amphetamine Reptile
**1/2
A fairly decent compilation featuring the likes of Lollipop, Unsane, Servotron and Supernova
—JPR

What the hell were you thinking? · You could've done worse. · Solid choice, nothing to be embarrassed about. · You're definitely in the know. · Play this for friends and they'll consider you a music guru.

SCI-FI ROCK PART 1:
MAN. . .OR ASTRO-MAN?

by
Benn Ray
and
Joseph P. Rybandt

NASA is currently planning to explore the possibility of life on Mars. However, all they will do is verify what many of us already know—there is life out there. From David Bowie's Ziggy Stardust phase to Hawkwind's bloated but experimental work based on the writings of Michael Moorcock to '50s space age pop, music has reflected our fascination with the void called outer space. Recently, the emergence of bands like Supernova, Servotron, and Man...or Astro-Man? have begun to reflect our renewed interest in science fiction (or is it science fact?).

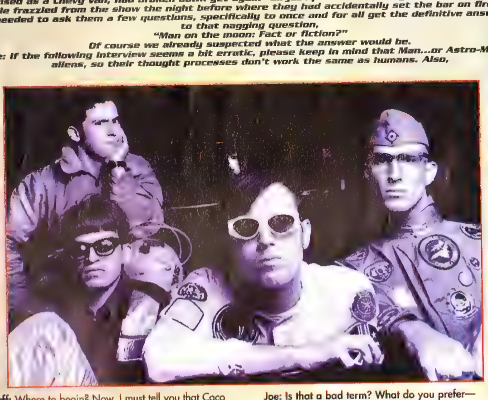
Man or...Astro-Man are not from around these parts. Claiming to be aliens from a grid sector located somewhere in deep space, this 4-alien ensemble is scouring our planet looking for parts to fix their damaged space craft and return home. With a frenetic '50s surf sound that is reminiscent of Link Wray on speed, these creatures play with masterful precision. Perhaps a little too masterful and a little too precise to be human.

It was a clear night when FAN caught up with the band on a fire-escape outside a bar in Baltimore, a night so clear you could see the stars. The band was running late because their mode of transportation, disguised as a Chevy van, had broken down yet again—all just part of their disguise. They were also a little frazzled from the show the night before where they had accidentally set the bar on fire. We needed to ask them a few questions, specifically to once and for all get the definitive answer to that nagging question,

"Man on the moon: Fact or fiction?"

Of course we already suspected what the answer would be.

Note: If the following interview seems a bit erratic, please keep in mind that Man...or Astro-Man are aliens, so their thought processes don't work the same as humans. Also,



Birdstuff: Where to begin? Now, I must tell you that Coco would inspect this device [referring to the recorder used to tape the interview]. Do you have normal-biased tape in here?

Benn: Yeah.
Birdstuff: Ok, I think that will work. Is this a voice-activated cassette tape player?

Benn: Yes.
Birdstuff: And it's a Realistic. Realistic has good products. The only musical instruments we play are Realistic. Coco is half Tandy [a Radio Shack electronics line]. Internal circuitry and all. What do you expect? So getting to the point of initiation, what would you guys like to know?
Benn: We want to talk to you about sci-fi rock.

Joe: Is that a bad term? What do you prefer—"space rock" or "sci-fi rock?"
Birdstuff: The only thing I don't like about "space rock" is that it automatically makes me think of Hawkwind

Joe: [Defensively] And you have a problem with that?
Birdstuff: No, not necessarily. Just the designs of dragons budding out of mushrooms...

Joe: ...and pyramids...
Birdstuff: Yeah, we're not doing the [Michael] Moorcock thing. We're trying to stay away from that. Our space is definitely not a ritual.

Joe: But you're familiar with the terminology of Hawkwi

which is **good. You know about Moorcock and the pyramids...**
Birdstuff: Unfortunately so. When you get the Official Space Certificate, as it combines around with the world and the realm of music, they make you listen to a couple of Hawkwind records.

Benn: And besides, without Hawkwind, you wouldn't have Motorhead, since Lemmy came from Hawkwind.
Birdstuff: That's true.

Joe: So who do you see as an influence on what has technically been before called Space Rock or sci-fi rock?
Birdstuff: Whoever was beaming the transmissions that we received when we were vectoring out of control here to your planet. The guy seemed to have a lot of Ventures records. And a lot of .
Dexter X: ...early surf music.

Benn: Maybe the guy was also beaming some Link Wray your way?
Birdstuff: Yeah, lots of various Link Wray, lots of Joe Meek-type (revolutionary/wacko music producer of known for turning down the Beatles, David Bowie and Rod Stewart before they became famous) productions. And also a smattering of wacky theatrical crap like Devo and the Residents and Kraftwerk. I think somewhere everything got misinterpreted or the guy didn't take very good care of his records.
Dexter X: That's why we kind of missed the point on everything.

Benn: What planet are you from?
Birdstuff: We're not from a planet. Planets are actually very archaic systems for life forms to exist upon. We're from a grid sector.
Dexter X: Which is a much more advanced concept. We're from grid sector 23-86 1.
Star Crunch: And it's all downhill from here 'cause guess who just showed up? It's Coco The Electronic Monkey Wizard.
Coco The Electronic Monkey Wizard: Did you make sure he checked that thing out? [He grabs the tape recorder and begins inspecting it.]

Joe: Yeah, Birdstuff checked it out.
Coco: Ok, good. Is it up to astro spec?
Birdstuff: Yeah.
Coco: High enough standard?

Benn: It *is* a Realistic.
Birdstuff: I told them that you normally would check it out.
Coco: High enough standards even for me?
Birdstuff: It's normal bias.

[At this point Coco has a panicked look on his face and starts to walk away.]

Birdstuff: But it's cool, we'll make an exception for these guys. These guys are cool. I checked their creds.

Benn: We only buy the finest merchandise straight from Radio Shack, so it should be alright.
Birdstuff: Yeah, it's Realistic.
Coco: Ok, good.
Star Crunch: Yeah, I've been getting real tired of those imaginary tape recorders.
Birdstuff: I told them about the Tandy connection.
Coco: Yeah, Tandy.

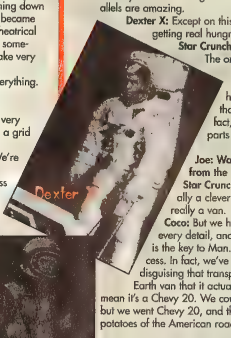
Joe: You're half Tandy.
Coco: Half. Well, about 48%.

Benn: Why are you so particular about the tape recorder?
Birdstuff: We've had a string of people who've acted like they wanted to interview us and came with various recording devices but there's never tapes or batteries in them.
Dexter X: It's all about experimentation, sex with aliens, anal probes. We don't appreciate this.

Benn: What do you find appealing about this planet?
Dexter X: Nothing.
Star Crunch: Not much.
Coco: Nothing.
Birdstuff: Nada.

Benn: Then why are you here?
Star Crunch: We crashed.
Dexter X: It's accidental.

Benn: Are you guys screwed? Are you like on Gilligan's Island or can you fix your ship and get off?
Coco: It's very similar to *Gilligan's Island* actually. The parallels are amazing.
Dexter X: Except on this island the Skipper's getting real hungry for the coconuts.
Star Crunch: We're working on it. The only reason we're touring is to find parts to our ship. And the process has taken a lot longer than we would've liked. In fact, we're still looking for parts for our tour van.



Joe: Was the van deployed from the mothership?
Star Crunch: No. The van is actually a clever disguise. It's not even really a van.
Coco: But we have gone so far into every detail, and let me tell you, detail is the key to Man...or Astro-Man's success. In fact, we've gone to such detail in disguising that transportation unit as an Earth van that it actually breaks down. I mean it's a Chevy 20. We could've gone econo-line, but we went Chevy 20, and that's like the meat and potatoes of the American road.

Benn: You also could've gone the whole retro-route with a kid-toucher van, no windows, all jacked up...
Joe: ...with a nice space scene airbrushed on the side.
Coco: No way. Conversion van! This is like some van a guy's parents would use to go to Disney World, and then they abandon the thing for some guys to use in a band. That's how clever this disguise actually is.

Benn: So how do you jumpstart a vehicle like that?
Birdstuff: It involves the double-dutch and some other moves we've learned out here on the streets of Baltimore.

Benn: Are you familiar with American cinema? Have you seen movies like *Star Wars, 2001: A Space Odyssey, Close Encounters, ET*?
Dexter X: Of course we have.

Benn: Are all of these movies a crock? Are any of them Realistic?
Coco: What do you mean realistic? It's science *fiction*...

Dr. Deleto: ...and we're science fact.
Birdstuff: Speaking of movies, we're thinking about going back and doing all the Man...or Astro-man records with new and improved digital sound.
Coco: In fact, we've been talking with Lucasfilm about doing some projects in tandem. Maybe get Spielberg involved. He's really good in his typical role as a director, but we think his expertise might be put to better use in acting. How often do you get to see him?
Dexter X: We'll be reversing the whole situation.

Benn: So you want to turn the tables on him.
Coco: It's a whole reversal, if you know what I'm talking about. We might be working with him.
Birdstuff: But we don't want to start rumors.
Coco: Man...or Astro-Man, Spielberg and of course in conjunction with Lucasfilm. That whole Industrial Light and Magic off-shoot is really our fabrication facility that we use to make the parts that we can't find. It's a front, like a bookie joint. A disguise. Like a Chinese restaurant/gambling thing going on.
Dexter X: Coco, we're going to the rejuvenation chamber.
Coco: Is it time?
Birdstuff: No, it is not time yet.

Benn: In any of your travels have you encountered a band named Supernova?
Star Crunch: Yeah, we destroyed their home planet.

Benn: And then you come to Earth. I would think you'd play different instruments than traditional Earth instruments.
Birdstuff: That's merely a facade. It's a veneer.
Coco: We're not playing musical instruments.
Star Crunch: We're not playing. All our stuff's been pre-recorded.
Birdstuff: Those are actually sexual toys.
Dexter X: Space is a vacuum you know.
Birdstuff: In space...
Star Crunch: ...no one can hear you suck

Joe: Well, we don't want to keep you from dinner.
Birdstuff: The whole dinner thing is, in itself, a veneer...
Coco: ...a clever ploy.
Birdstuff: We just want to make you guys feel comfortable.

Joe: Dinner is just an Earth concept?
Birdstuff: It comes out of a compartment in our heel.

Benn: Do you actually ingest food?
Coco: Not for nutritional needs.

Benn: So it's just for pleasure?
Birdstuff: We've done the bicycle parts thing is what we're saying.

Benn: How do you find Earth women?
Birdstuff: We've never found them in any way. They're very desirous of us just because they want to interlock with Coco's joystick mechanism. They found out that he does have the Atari joystick with the functioning button, where the rest of us have more of a paddle-type mechanism. Not many girls want to play **Night Driver**. But I've had sex.

Benn: What goes on in the replenishing chamber exactly?
Coco: Just straight-forward replenishin'.

Benn: So the whole band thing is just your way of going around to find parts to get the hell off of this dump?
Coco: Y'know, we thought it was such a clever idea and a nice disguise when we first came up with it. We had it all worked out, all our tours were planned, we had departure covered, and we knew exactly what date we'd be out of here. And this was a year and a half ago, so obviously it's not working.

Joe: So you're off schedule?
Coco: But what we didn't realize is we did this whole thing like "So you want to be an indy band."
Birdstuff: Yes, I would like to be in an indy band

Coco: They get to travel all over the place, so we could be an indy band, like a lot of those indy bands. But then we had to start dealing with Earthlings to set up these tours, the promoters and agents and all these people think we're a band. But the problem has been that we've got parts located in the middle of the Indian Ocean, for example. Now we're trying to convince our agent that we need to do this tour to the middle of the Indian Ocean. And we didn't realize that indy bands don't typically do those sorts of things, so it's taken us a lot longer.

Benn: Maybe you could book a gig on the Carnival Cruise line.
Coco: Yeah, maybe. You heard about that big show that Metallica-Hole thing up in Antarctica?

Joe: Yeah.
Coco: And what do you think they're up to? Who knows? So if you hear on the radio "Win tickets to see Man...or Astro-Man live in the Indian Ocean..."

Joe: We know what you're going' there for.
Coco: Yes, you would know. Just don't tell anybody.

Joe: So when you get your parts, where are you off to?
Coco: Home. Grid Sector 23-86 1.
Birdstuff: We've been a little successful. We found the floor mats. A lot of these new bands like Nada Surf, Superdrag, all these bands think they're really hot stuff. They think they're "in." They've got the hot rotation on MTV video, but have they played Tasmania?
Coco: No sir.
Birdstuff: Because Man...or Astro-Man have rocked the citizens of Tasmania.

Benn: You played in Tasmania?
Birdstuff: Yes we have indeed. And we did find the Roormate there.
Coco: So it was well worth going to Tasmania. We didn't even need a map.

Benn: So perhaps you could answer a question that Joe and I have long debated: Man on the Moon, fact or fiction?
Birdstuff: Have you ever seen a little film, well some people call it a film, we call it a documentary, *Capricorn 1* with Mr. O.J. Simpson? Well that is no Hertz commercial, that is true to life

TOUCH AND GO RECORDS

&

OVERSTREET'S FAN

PRESENT

THE GREAT SCI-FI ROCK PRIMER PART 1

In [illegible] those of you who may be [illegible] with sci-fi rock, we [illegible] help others improve their record collections, we've a great chance to win the most spanking [illegible] of [illegible] Man? [illegible] Man?

[illegible] winners will receive: [illegible] Rubowsky [illegible] personally [illegible] [illegible] Astro-Man in Outer Space [illegible] and [illegible] (Pre and Pre Min Who Fly Them) [illegible] back issues!

[illegible] send your name, age, [illegible] completed coupon on [illegible] Touch & Go Publishing, Inc., [illegible] Box 1258, Evanston, IL 60204-1258 [illegible] Issue 405, [illegible] or 2 back.

I know they're aliens.
I just don't care.

Name_____

Age_____

Address_____

City_____

State_____ Zip_____

Max Gottfried is the

THE CARD INDUSTRY REVIEW FOR 1996

Survival

Imagine leaving the boxing ring after a fight with Mike Tyson. You get the stuffing kicked out of you, but you live to tell about it. That's how many of the card companies feel after another harrowing year. The prosperous period of just two or three years ago is gone, and profits, in some cases, are now second to mere survival. **Dark Dominion**. **Deathwatch 2000**. **Tribe**. **Tek World**. Remember these card releases? They're nothing but a fond memory along with the companies that produced them. While the card market for 1996 was pretty dismal, it has not bottomed out. That's good. It shows there is some light at the end of the tunnel. There's hope. It's the same old adage for card manufacturers: "Know your market!" The primary factors for collectors, retailers and the casual buyer are price, quality, and quantity. Any card product not taking into consideration one of these three ingredients is doomed.

Many of the card reporters questioned for this year-in-review expressed displeasure with Fleer/SkyBox's $5.00 price tag for **Marvel Motion**. On the other hand, they couldn't argue with the breakthrough quality and limited quantity. Most were sold out of the product, too. Collation plays an important part in determining if a product is successful. Shelling out $50-$75 for a box of cards and not being able to complete a set is disgraceful. Let's say a complete set of basic cards is offered by a retailer for 35 bucks. The poor card collector feels humiliated by pouring more money into a product which he should have received in the first place. Think he'll buy a box of Series 2?

Card companies are listening to all of us card sharks. Take for example InkWorks, which offers a guarantee that states each display box will contain at least one complete basic set. Bravo! Topps had a sorting problem with its **Star Wars Finest** cards but quickly responded to customers' concerns with an exchange program. Now, in a letter to retailers, Topps' Vice President, Ira Friedman has made assurances that customers will get a minimum of one complete set per display box from its newest release, **Star Wars 3D**. Topps really hits a home run by listening to what the collector wants, and at $3.00 per pack of three cards, this is a grand slam. Fleer/SkyBox and many other companies have customer service departments to assist with similar problems.

1996: Only the Strong Survive

- FPG, the all-time leader of fantasy art cards, has suspended its card production until the market is more open to their type of product. A Kelley Freas series, solicited earlier this year, never made it to the printing presses. They will continue successfully with other publishing ventures, and The Card Shark can't wait for their return to friendlier surroundings.
- Maxx Trading Card never made it out of the starting gate and filed for bankruptcy before one non-sport card was printed.
- Donruss, most famous for their sports cards, did produce card series "classics" such as **Twister**, **Flipper**, and **Joe's Apartment** in 1996 before taking a nose-dive.
- Collect-A-card has some retailers speculating if it will continue after poor responses to its McDonald's products.
- Fleer/SkyBox discontinued its working relationship in 1996 with outside public relations firms to streamline its accounting. Fleer/SkyBox continues as the predominant leader in the manufacturing of non-sports cards
- Topps Ceased production at its Duryea, Pennsylvania factory. In service since 1965, this printing facility produced a great number of card products. With its eye on the bottom line, the decision was made to close the plant after bargaining with the employee representatives and giving thorough consideration to alternatives. By going to outsourcing its production, the company estimates a savings of $9 million annually. No, there is no product "laying about" ready for the auction block. So get the thought out of your head that uncut sheets of Star Wars products will surface. This action will further strengthen the Topps Company in 1997 and its role in the trading card industry.

The Top 10 Card Products of the Year

Assembling the most popular card products is no easy task. A variety of retailers were questioned, ranging geographically from the mid-west and the Pacific region, to the South and the Northeast. Some specialized in trading cards while others owned comic shops where cards sold. Some sold only sets and others sold by the pack and box. Many collected or sold a particular genre of card, so that was also taken into consideration. Calculations were definitely influenced by sales, but also by originality, popularity, quality, and collectibility. A random selection of both casual and hardcore collectors were also given the opportunity to cast their vote. The Card Shark continued each individual, so there was no ballot stuffing. For the first time ever, FAN proudly presents the premier card sets for 1996.

10. COMIC IMAGES SUPREME

9. SPAWN CHROMIUM
8. JAMES BOND CONNOISSEUR COLLECTION VOL. 1
7. SPIDER-MAN PREMIUM
6. ELVIRA
5. MARVEL MOTION
4. BABYLON 5 SERIES II
3. KINGDOM COME
2. X-FILES III
1. STAR WARS FINEST

Getting squeaked out were **Batman Masterpieces**, **Gen 13 Chromium**, **Razor I Chromium**, **Metallic Masterpieces of Fantasy**, **Marvel Masterpieces**, **DC**, and **Star Trek Phase II**. The addition of recent releases such as **Babylon 5** and **Elvira** were surprising. It was disappointing that **Concept Marvel Years**, **CyberForce Summer**, **Superman Action Packs**, or **The Crow: City of Angels** didn't make the grade. It just goes to show you what role the card shark had in the voting. Because of the time element involved, card releases of **Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire** or **Marvel Masterpieces** could not be included. They will, of course, be eligible candidates for next year's tally.

"Trading Cards: Wholesome Fun or Gambling?"

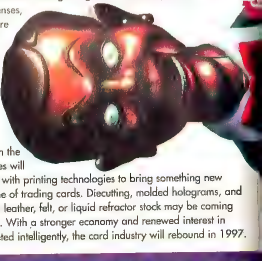
By Max Gottfried
The Card Shark

This was the headline for an article which ran in the Wall Street Journal on October 25, 1996. A series of lawsuits filed in recent months under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) argue that the inclusion of chase cards is a form of illegal lottery. The lawsuits were brought about by New York lawyer Alan Hock, who says his eight-year-old son was hooked on the search for long-odds chase cards. "It took me three months of watching my son become addicted to this stuff before the illegality of this hit me in the face," Hock claims.

Under the law, illegal gambling contains three elements: consideration, chance, and a prize. The lawyers in question maintain the industry falls under the definition because a pack of cards costs money (consideration), buyers don't know what they're getting (chance), and relatively few chase cards are printed with the stated odds of getting them printed on the pack and they have a resale value (the prize). The suits name six top manufacturers of sports and entertainment cards as well as the marketing arms of the 4 major professional sports leagues. A Topps spokesperson relegated the lawsuits as "Ridiculous and without merit." Wildstorm card director Ted Adams echoed the sentiment and further added that "chase" or "insert" cards contain only a *perceived* value. The card companies do not affix a price on these cards and they are not considered prizes. 16 year-old Kevin Hake of Overland Park, Kansas, was quoted in the article as saying, "When you buy a $5 pack, you are looking for the value that's hidden inside the pack. You might get nothing or you might get a $125 card." Excuse me, Kevin, but regardless if you find that Joe Schmo' basketball card, you are still getting three dollars' worth of cards. The Card Shark will bring you all the details of this case as soon as they are known.

What's in Store For 1997?

The Card Shark repeats those three important words: Know Your Market. It's disheartening to walk into a comic/card store and hear the owner shout expletives over having only sold 1/2 a box of **Batman Action** packs out of 6 boxes ordered, while at mass-market outlets, this card product is selling like hotcakes. The same can be said for **Goosebump** cards. These are two solid products geared to a younger market which hopefully would introduce these kids to more sophisticated card releases. Here's a suggestion: if you do not have the customers for this type of product, don't buy it! There are card products with the collector in mind which cater to this market. If the **Kingdom Come** comic was a so-so seller for you, what makes you think the cards will do any better? While if **Poison Elves** is a popular comic, the same may apply to the card series. Card companies should also seek out properties which are not borderline material. **Flipper** smelled from the beginning. Often when big bucks are shelled out for costly licenses, the product becomes more expensive and less limited. In 1997, card companies will produce only surefire winners. **Waterworld** is a thing of the past. So it looks like we will have a smaller but stronger card industry in the coming year. Companies will continue to experiment with printing technologies to bring something new and exciting to their line of trading cards. Diecutting, molded holograms, and multi-foil embossing on leather, felt, or liquid refractor stock may be coming faster than you know it. With a stronger economy and renewed interest in popular licenses marketed intelligently, the card industry will rebound in 1997.



NEW RELEASES YOU MUST NOT MISS

Here's a quick round-up of some of the coolest sets sliding into 1996 just under the wire:

•Fleer recently released two movie card products. **101 Dalmations** is a great kids item with plenty of interactivity retelling the live-action movie. Story, Stickums, Pop-ups, Puppy Pin-ons, Color-In cards and a Mini-magazine are all part of the 101 cards. The bonuses are cool, too, with **4** Magnetic Frames and 2 Foil 'N Fur cards.

•**Star Trek: First Contact** follows the format of **Babylon 5 II** with a smaller basic set (60 storyline cards) and a large assortment of bonus cards. They include 12 Technocel Borg cards, 6 new Enterprise-E cards, 6 Ships' Blueprint Posters, 10 Character cards, 10 Behind the Scenes cards, and 1 Autographed Brent Spiner card. The random inclusion varies.

•December releases include **Star Trek: Voyager Season Two** (100 Basic cards + 4 levels of bonuses, $1.49 gets you an 8 card pack) and **Marvel Masterpieces 1996**. Boris Vallejo and Julie Bell have each painted 50 of their favorite Marvel characters, and each foil-stamped card is printed on thick 20-point stock. Quotes by Stan Lee and John Romita share how they designed, illustrated, and imagined the most beloved characters in the Marvel

universe. Three levels of chase cards will make you go ga-ga: Masterpiece Gallery (8), Double Embossed (5), and Masterpiece Painting Redemption cards entitle the holder to win an original Boris or Julie Bell painting (9 total cards). This hobby-only product will limited to about 500 cases.

•Another card series distributed only to specialty outlets is **X-Men 2099** by Tim & Greg Hildebrandt. This 90 card release, originally reported in last issue, has some unique background information which may be a harbinger of things to come in the card industry. It is licensed, marketed and solicited as a Fleer/SkyBox product, but it is produced by Comic Images. While all parties are hesitant to say this is a collaboration, this effort between companies is a first. Such a work arrangement can only help a weak market.

•More involved is the relationship between Comic Images and DuoCards, a relatively new company which specializes in classic entertainment such as **The Wizard of Oz**, **It's A Wonderful Life**, and **Abbott & Costello**. All are 72 card series on 24-point stock manufactured by Comic Images for DuoCards. Look for these nostalgic gems at a comic/card store this winter.

•The growing faithful of *X-Files* fans are going to flip for Topps' **X-Files Showcase** in January. These 72 double UV-coated super wide cards feature never-before-seen images from the most imitated show on TV. 72 cards make up this cool collection of—get this—nearly 300 scintillating photo images. With two levels of chase cards, **X-Files Showcase** is pure eye candy.

•It's a happy new year indeed with the **James Bond Connoisseur's Collection Volume Two**. This second volume will feature dozens of fascinating images from the 5 films in 007's second decade on the silver screen. This high quality all-new sequel of 90 cards, guaranteed one set per box, will treat fans, collectors, and secret agents to full-bleed color photos stamped in foil. The Moore Dossier (highlighting Roger Moore's contribution to the Bond legend) and Enemies & Allies (encapsulates the good guys and the bad guys) are specially designed subsets for number two. The Women of Bond, Movie Posters, and the incredible Goldworks bonus card will have every spy-guy racing in their Aston Martin for this premium product.

•Shout Bravo! for an ambitious 9 card set produced by independent artist Hugo Bravo. These nine cards when assembled reveal a black & white image of a gun-toting, metal-studded babe getting shot while peering through venetian blinds. Happens every day in New York. Card #7 asks, "who is trying to kill her? Does she always dress this way?" Hugo Bravo will answer these questions in future card releases distributed through comic stores and conventions.

•Don't pass up **The Widow Special Edition Collector's Card Set** produced by those wild men at Ground Zero Comics. 27 cards of super intensity include **Widow** comic covers artwork, upcoming previews, never-before-seen art, plus a signed & numbered title card. Colored by Inferno Studios, these mouth-watering cards were illustrated by Mike Wolfer, Dan Parsons, Stephen Sandoval, Karl Waller, and more. The 3 promotional cards of Harpy, Blue Dog, and Widow/Luxura will be the bonus cards of this bloody good set, of which only 500 are being produced. Besides a select number of retail outlets, sets may be ordered directly from Ground Zero for $14.95 at PO Box 1832, Dover, Delaware 19903-1832.

SPECIAL THANKS: Paul & Judy's Coins & Cards-Arthur, IL. Christopher Chang International Card Exchange Brooklyn, NY. Luis Vargas Comic Den-Kew Gardens NY. Clyde Tietjens New & Then Mason City, IA And the many devoted Card Shark who have graciously contributed their valued information.

anime cel-ebration!

manga anime

By Jason E. Topolosky

Japanese animated films are themselves art. However, actual cels from these films have not, as of yet, received the same amount of recognition as their American counterparts. But that is changing. As an animation cel collector, I am impressed by the Japanese cel not only for the obvious reasons (such as the actual cels) but for more subtle differences (such as color choices and angles). Fortunately, the Japanese animation cel market has not experienced huge price increases, as in the American cel market, and most cels can be acquired at a fraction of what American animation cels would cost. Most cels (including one or more characters, nicely proportioned with their eyes open) can be purchased for what a traditional American reproduction (seri-cel) costs (approximately $100-$250) or less.

Chroma, Chroma, Chroma-Cel™ chameleon...
Animated Collectibles is introducing a line of collectible, low-priced animation cels. Sharper than traditional cels, the Chroma-Cel™ is created via a computerized laser process, through the transfer of an actual production cel image onto a cel. Priced at $14.95, this new patent-pending invention offers the clearest, sharpest image and most vivid colors ever printed on a cel. Each Chroma-Cel™ comes matted and shrink-wrapped, complete with a Seal of Authenticity printed on the front of the cel and a Certificate of Authenticity (which indicates the edition size) on the back of the mat. Each custom-cut mat is foil-embossed with the actual title as seen on the video box, and each matted Chroma-Cel™ measures 8" x 10" so it will fit a standard size frame. These are the first Chroma-Cels™ ever created! There are three Chroma-Cels to choose from:

"M.D. Geist II: Death Force" Chroma-Cel™ (Limited edition size: 1500).

"Project A-Ko" Chroma-Cel™ (Limited edition size: 750).

"Urotsukidoji II: Legend of the Demon Womb" Chroma-Cel™ (Limited edition size: 1500)

Dub a dub dub...
Fortunately, more and more anime product is being dubbed, resulting in a wider acceptance of the genre. I myself am a fan of the dubbed versions rather than their subtitled counterparts. So this month, I have selected some well-done dubs.... I hope that you enjoy them as much as I have.

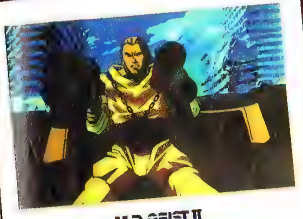
Doomed Megalopolis: The Series
In 1912, a mysterious sorcerer named Plato attempts to

awaken the guardian spirit of Tokyo, Tairo no Masakado. Legend has it that ever since Tairo no Masakado died in the rebellion against the Imperial Court some 2000 years before, his spirit guards Tokyo. However, as the legend also warns, if he were ever to awaken, all of Tokyo could be destroyed in his wrath (Which is naturally what happens or there would not have been a movie, but that's another story).

Kato casts but alas, cannot break the seal on the grave. Frustrated, he turns his efforts instead toward a young girl named Yukari Tatsumiya. He decides to use her as a living sacrifice for Masakado's ghost. As a result, a curse is passed on by the Tatsumiya family, and an evil legacy is passed on.

Yukari begins to suffer fainting spells and horrible visions of destruction as Kato's demons invade her dreams. Even with the help of a powerful priest, Yukari's defenders are unable to protect her, and she's eventually kidnapped by Kato, going on to bear a child who then becomes the focus of his evil intentions. This is where my only criticism of **Doomed Megalopolis** arises. The story is pretty familiar in this sense, lacking any originality. The real saving grace for this film is that it's really scary! Be warned that there is a fair amount of sexual imagery in this series as well, and some really gory stuff—not for all audiences or the faint of heart.

The animation is superb, crafted by some of the most well respected animators within the anime industry—Supervising Director Taro Rin (Dagger of Camui), Character Designer Masayuki, Screenplay Writer Akinari Endo, Animation Director Hideaki Anno (Honneamise), and Character Designer Yashiyuki Sadamoto (Nadia). The animation alone is pretty amazing—the great effects and the really creepy mood make this series a real keeper. From Streamline Pictures.



Grappler Baki: The Ultimate Fighter

In the tradition of **Fatal Fury, Samuri Showdown,** and **Street Fighter** comes another great martial arts anime. From U.S. Manga Corps comes **Grappler Baki: The Ultimate Fighter**. Priced at $19.95, this dubbed video will debut in February. Featuring incredible action scenes and fantastic martial arts maneuvers, **Grappler Baki** is sure to be a hit with any martial arts fans out there. The martial arts in **Grappler Baki** are more along the lines of a **Mortal Combat** video game than a movie, and the fighting sequences are gory and most certainly well done.

Grappler Baki is the story of Baki Hanma, a unique unknown martial artist with the ability to defeat an opponent with a single blow. At the Shinshinkai Organization's private arena, anything goes and the odds are always stacked against you. For the first time, Baki must fight an opponent he knows almost nothing about: Kosho Shinogi-The Cord Cutter. Shinogi possesses the ability to penetrate his opponent's skin, grab their cord-like nerves and rip them out, leaving the victim paralyzed or dead. I really enjoyed this movie not only for the martial art sequences, but because of the mystique of an unknown fighter. Check this one out from U.S. Manga Corps.

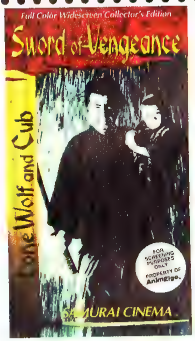
...n O'Connell, Managing Director of Central Park Media, presents Koichi ...ata, famed Director and creator of **M.D. Geist**, a plaque congratulating ...ata on **M.D. Geist II** reaching #31 on Billboard's *Top 50* chart.

Space Warriors

Directed by Tetsu Kimura and based on the original screenplay by Takeshi Hirota and the comics of Yuki Hijiri, **Space Warrior** is a feature-length, sci-fi tale featuring gigantic

space battles, a secret conspiracy, and incredible psychic powers. **Space Warriors** delivers the perfect mix of action and intrigue

It is the future, and the infamous space pirate Lord Leon has embarked on a mission of revenge—he has dedicated himself to the annihilation of the Great Zog, chairman of the influential Astro Corporation. Fearing that Lord Leon may possess advanced psychic abilities, the Federation has recruited Locke, the one warrior with the power to challenge him. Now, Locke must uncover the connection between the infamous space pirate and an innocent school teacher—a secret that could topple one of the largest corporations in the galaxy! But the Great Zog has discovered Lord Leon's secret, a seemingly innocent, blind school teacher—and perhaps the key to an eighteen-year old conspiracy. Using telekinesis, mental barriers and blasts of pure mental energy, a relentless space pirate and a young special agent clash in a spectacular psychic battle. **Space Warriors** will be available dubbed for $19.95.



esoterica

Jeff Dillion

Usually these few pages are dedicated to the wonderful worlds of anime and manga, but now we'd like to take you down some less travelled roads.

First off: Samurai Cinema!!!

Coming from AnimEigo is **Sword of Vengeance** featuring those classic characters Lone Wolf and Cub. It's a tale of vengeance, masterless samurai, assassins, epic sword fights, and a heavily armed baby carriage. Don't think, just watch!

And now the good stuff. This is for all you guys and girls who secretly wish all those girls from Sailor Moon and such were real. Sickos.

Meet Apollo Smile.

She's the real life Live Action/Anime Girl. She tools around the universe kicking ass and looking cute. Trust me she can kick your ass. This is just part of her resume: Singing-Songwriting-Martial Arts-Axe-Throwing-Swords-Firearms-Kick Boxing-and she can work a Mac. In her quest to save the world Apollo is also an accomplished Recording artist. Her self titled album is filled with catchy pop tunes and lyrics that would make most of you blush. ■

The reviews are in! Hake's guide is a hit!

"IT'S AS IF A GAUNTLET HAS BEEN THROWN DOWN. HOW CAN ANYONE WHO DOESN'T GET THIS BOOK HOPE TO BE A SERIOUS PLAYER IN COMICS AND COLLECTIBLES?"

JERRY ROBINSON
ARTIST, CREATOR OF ROBIN & THE JOKER
NEW YORK

"This book brings together just about everything one could want to know about toy premium collecting, including a great history and introduction to the field."

Don Phelps
Collector
Massachusetts

"This is the price guide that will define what all price guides should be."

Scott Ross
Comic Book Retailer
Florida

"Hake's Price Guide is more than just a price guide. It's the best history and reference book on collecting comic characters ever done!"

Harry Matetsky
Collector
New York

"I can't get over the quality and production values of this book. It is an amazing piece of work. I've never seen anything like it. This book helps me deal with all the historic information. The pricing is just a minor part. It makes me a genius."

Bill Campbell
Comic Character Dealer
Alabama

"There is no other tool for collectors like Ted Hake's new book. There is no competition for this book. None. Period. This book will do for toys what the Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide did for comics."

Keif Fromm
Historian/Collector
New Jersey

"To call Hake's Price Guide 'amazing' would be like calling Action Comics #1, my favorite book, 'fairly collectible.' This book blows away any price guide I've ever seen."

Dave Anderson
Collector
Virginia

"Well researched, well thought out, and cogently presented. Hake's Price Guide to Character Toy Premiums is packed with more great stuff than most collectors could dream of."

Peter Merolo
Art Collector
Arizona

"Ted Hake's new book is practically a road map to the hidden gold mine that is character toy premiums. X no longer marks the spot. Hake's Price Guide does!"

Rob Hall
Collector
Pennsylvania

"This book will be the one collectors remember as starting something big!"

Bill Grandey
Publisher
Oregon

"What more could a serious fan or collector ask for? It's all in this book!"

Chuy Reynolds
Writer
Texas

"People who don't buy this book will be roundly and rightly ridiculed by neighbors, friends, and co-workers. They will be driven before us in the streets like the ignorant collectors they are. Get your torches and pitchforks and round 'em up!"

Steve Ison
Collector
Indiana

"When recognized experts testify to the quality and accuracy of a reference work, its credibility is firmly established. Hake's Price Guide has been endorsed by some of the most illustrious names in the comics industry, proving that this fine volume has earned its place as the definitive source on the vast world of toy premium collectibles."

—Arnold T. Blumberg

To order call 1(800)783-2981 for Gemstone Publishing, or see your local comic book retailer. Dealer inquiries welcome.

WANNA PLAY GAMES?

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

by Steve Fritz

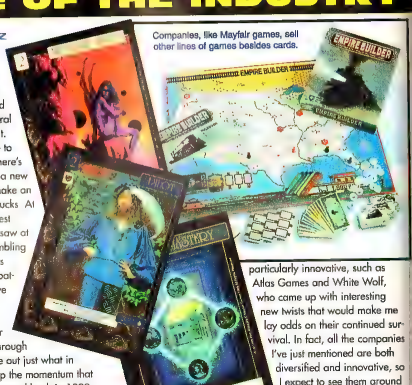
WHERE WE'RE AT

I had an interesting experience this weekend. I actually taught a kid to play a CCG he hadn't tried before. Considering the last several months, that's an accomplishment. For as much as card gamers like to grumble about playing **Magic**, there's a growing reluctance to pick up a new game where the gamer has to make an investment of more than a few bucks. At the same time, when Magic's latest expansion, **Mirage**, came out, I saw at least one of these self-same grumbling kids plop $400 for display boxes and start busting packs without batting an eye. The kid couldn't have been more than 15 years-old.

This is both good and bad.

1996 was an interesting year for the gaming industry. It's going through a state of flux. It's trying to figure out just what in the world it's going to take to keep the momentum that **Magic** and the other CCG's generated back in 1993. Nowadays, anyone with even half a brain knows the joy ride is over. A handful of CCG companies have closed their doors permanently. Other product lines are now in the severely discounted bin.

If anything, unless it's Wizards of the Coast, the main reasons why CCG manufacturers will survive are because they're diversified into other areas of the gaming industry. Classic examples are Mayfair Games or Heartbreaker Hobbies, or those that are particularly innovative, such as Atlas Games and White Wolf, who came up with interesting new twists that would make me lay odds on their continued survival. In fact, all the companies I've just mentioned are both diversified and innovative, so I expect to see them around for a while.



Companies, like Mayfair games, sell other lines of games besides cards.

AN EXAMPLE

Still, I remember going to a product demo by one of the major CCG companies last month. They were GIVING AWAY starter decks of their latest, and to be quite honest damn good, CCG. Even though there were a number of people more than willing to shell out money to participate in the tournament for the company's other more well-established CCG, they could only give out two—that's more than one but less than three—of the new game's starter decks. In other words, the company almost couldn't give their game away.

Being media, the company comped me and I'll be honest enough to say with what I got for free, plus what I bought, I managed to put together two decent decks. Trying to get someone else to take me on, even with one of my own decks, that was another problem. The gamers were just reluctant to take it on. They didn't want to make, as they would say, "the investment." This is not good for new card games out there.

On the other hand, I noticed that more than enough

White Wolf's Rage

people were more than willing to check out Atlas' **Lunch Money**. The reasons for that are two-fold. First of all, the game's a ton of fun. Secondly, if the gamer likes it, all they have to do is plunk down a maximum of $17 dollars suggested retail and they have all the cards they ever need.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Companies like Atlas and Mayfair have been savagely retooling their card games. As previously reported, Atlas' next On **The Edge** expansion, **Chaos Plague**, is much like **Lunch Money**, in that all the cards you have to buy are all available in one boxed set. From there, you can play **Chaos Plague** like a standalone game. Also, if you're a hardcore **Edge** player like myself, you can take your **Chaos Plague** cards and mix them into your already existing **Edge** decks. Mayfair has already established this through their Sim **City** City decks. In fact, Mayfair president Darwin Bromley has gone so far as to mix up such decks as the **New York City** and **Washington DC** standalone City decks to produce a deck that pre-supposes that New York is still the capital of the United States (it originally was, history buffs).

Mayfair's **Sim City** line was a great success.

See a pattern here? It all really boils down to money. Gamers don't want to make "the investment" into new games if they perceive it's going to cost them a lot of money. On the other hand, if it stays below—and on this point, I'm just ball-parking it—a total cost of $25, they'll go for it. For a kid who plunks $400 for new Magic cards, this is cigarette money.

The ever-popular Wizards of the Coast Magic cards

SOLUTIONS

White Wolf has taken an alternative route. Their latest CCG, **Arcadia**, only requires an initial start-up "investment" of $5.00 total. If you end up liking the game, you can buy more cards. If you don't, it's no biggie. **Arcadia** has a small following around these parts.

I dunno if it will ever catch on enough to compete with **Magic**, Daedalus' **Shadowfist**, Fleer's **OverPower**, Decipher's **Star Wars** or White Wolf's own **Rage** CCGs, but I'd give it better odds than a number of other games out there.

Speaking of the more established games, I get the feeling that those last five games I mentioned as well as Alderac's **Legends of the Five Rings**, Image's **WildStorm** and a few others will still be around to see 1997. The reason for this is the games are now, for lack of better words, firmly established. Gamers made "the investment" back in the boom time of 1994-5 and even like playing the games. I would be seriously surprised if they are failures.

The established games will most likely be continued successes. The worst that will happen is there will be some slippage in demand. I don't think it'll be that much when push comes to shove. Gamers are a particularly loyal lot. If they feel their favorite card company is doing all it can to insure they're happy, they'll continue to play the game

DIVERSITY

Remember what I said about the gaming industry diversifying? It's going much farther than you might expect. Heartbreaker Hobbies is a darn good example of this.

You see, while a number of successful games are based on already licensed products (**OverPower**, **WildStorm** and **Star Wars** are the big examples there), a number of other games are based on original—make that licensable—concepts. Sure you see a number of various **Magic**-related products out there including posters, artists' portfolios, and gaming sundries like counters and t-shirts. Heartbreaker's taken it to the limit, though.

Heartbreaker's main game is the **Mutant Chronicles** adventures. CCGers know it better for its **Doom Trooper** variant. There's also a miniature/board game version called **Warzone** (which is considered one of the finest examples of a miniature board game in the business by the way). Still, did you know there is going to be a *Mutant Chronicles* movie? It's being directed by no less than John Carpenter and starring Ben Kingsley, kids.

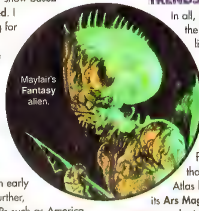
If you think the gaming industry isn't taking notice, you're crazy. There was the aborted attempt at a Fox TV show based on White Wolf's Vampire RPG, **The Kindred**. I know there's a film script or two circulating for **On The Edge**. I won't blink an eyeball if I hear of more deals being completed in the near future. That's just one aspect of this new form of licensing.

TSR already has granted six different licenses for PC/Internet versions of its various role playing games. The electronic versions of **Magic: The Gathering**, the long-awaited version from Spectrum Holobytes/MicroProse, and the real-time combat version by Acclaim are due out in early 1997. Further, major ISPs such as America Online, CompuServe, Total Entertainment Network and M-Path are all out there trying to convince these game companies that they want to produce internet versions of established card games. In fact, Wizards of the Coast itself has been placing advertising for such professionals as programmers and encoders like crazy lately. Think about it.

Image's Wildstorm cards.

TRENDS

In all, game manufacturers are reversing the trends of the last few years. Instead of hunting for hot licenses to create games around, they are actively looking for licensees to create new versions of their products. It's an encouraging trend, particularly as it seems there's a lot of interest being generated by the entertainment industry for these games.


Mayfair's Fantasy alien.

Another trend I'm keeping an eye on is gamers looking for other forms of low budget fun. One of the bigwigs at TSR reported to me that sales of their RPGs went up 20% in 1995. Atlas has been having a very enthusiastic response to its **Ars Magica** RPG. Daedalus found a very positive response to the introduction of its **Feng Shui** RPG. Last Unicorn had to produce a second printing of its **Aria** RPG. I can add a number of other examples to my list, but you get the drift. Jose Garcia of Daedalus once told me he feels the reason for this increase in RPGs is the return of many old role playing gamers to the fold. They had gone away to do such such things as start careers, get married, have children and the like. Now they are established and feel a night with some old friends, a lot of dice, and the and beverage of choice is a good way to spend an evening. It also doesn't hurt that the investment in the latest RPG source book and a couple of adventure modules would only cost you a total of $50, if that much. That's a lot cheaper than trying to stay up-to-date on *Magic* or any other CCG.

I would concur with Garcia, but I think what's also happening is a number of CCG kids have also discovered RPGs themselves. It's interesting to see scads of gamers running around with a couple

Shadowfist making moves in '96.

Fleer's **Overpower** cards

of 'Fist decks and multi-face dice in their bags and adventure sheets for the Feng Shui RPG in a folder on the side. It makes me think WotC threw the baby out with the bathwater when they canceled their **Magic** RPG last December.

It's also made me see the status of Live Action Role Playing games. I heard a nightclub in the Soho/East Village area of my native New York is having a great time with a Vampire LARP at this moment. A ton of little goth kids have latched onto the game and make weekly pilgrimages to said club to play. Maybe I'll do something about this in a future article.

PRO TOURS

This leaves only one last area of investigation, and that's the whole idea of the Magic Pro Tours. I'll admit the purses Wizards of the Coast have been offering for top Magic players is enticing, but I know a ton of kids out there who have no intentions of ever competing on that level. First of all, they find the entry price (which can now go up to $25) a bit steep. Second of all, there's this thing about players who come out of nowhere and win it all at one of these tournaments.

Sure, the dark horse player who comes home with tens of thousands of dollars is a good story. On the other hand, it's also driving home the point that Magic is a game that's built as much on luck as strategy. It's causing an interesting conundrum in its own right and makes me think the Magic Pro Tours are more an aberration than something that's going to take hold. I'll wait until next year to see which way this trend goes.

ON THE WHOLE

So, in all, it's been an interesting year for the gaming industry. Card games still dominate, but it seems that gamers are not willing to make the investment in new card games like they used to. On the other hand, gamers are still looking for alternatives. It's getting down to how they are going to spend their money.

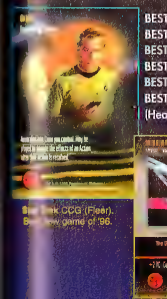
Last Unicorn's Aria

If anything, money will be the deciding factor when it comes to what the gaming industry will look like in 1997. I'd bet anyone it's still going to be around. I'll even bet there will be people still playing **Magic**, 'Fist, **OverPower** and a number of other games. On the other hand, I'd also bet there will be some serious changes going down. I'd take my money off the table if you asked me what those are going to be

One last drink with Mayfair's **Fantasy** ins

TOP CCGs OF THE YEAR

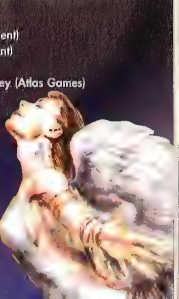
It's a FAN tradition that I don't necessarily like doing, but it must be done and that is pick the best games of the last year. Let me be honest. I hate these lists. Usually after I write mine, I get a number of calls from games that I do like asking why I didn't pick them. I also get a letter from a major case of why I didn't say something about such and such game. Whatever. Here's my picks of the year.



BEST GAME OF 1996: Lunch Money (Atlas Games)
BEST CCG OF 1996: Shadowfist (Daedalus Entertainment)
BEST RPG OF 1996: Feng Shui (Daedalus Entertainment)
BEST ART DESIGN OF 1996: Heresy (Last Unicorn Games)
BEST NEW GAME OF 1996: Star Trek CCG (Fleer)/Lunch Money (Atlas Games)
BEST MINIATURES OF 1996: Dark Eden/Warzone (Heartbreaker Hobbies)

Star Trek CCG (Fleer), Best new game of '96.

Shadowfist won best CCG of '96.



Heresy (Last Unicorn) soars with Best Art Design.

MEGABYTE ME

Well, they say all good things must come to an end, and this year is no exception. 1996 was a great year for all of us video game jockeys who drool over every new title that comes out. But this year was even better—the new Nintendo 64 system was released, with over 450,000 units sold in the first few months after it exploded on to the market. We at FAN would like to thank the fine folks at interAct for allowing us to borrow one of their extra 64 systems. Even with all this Nintendo hoopla going on, Sony was busy working on their much anticipated Crash Bandicoot. (I know, every one has seen the commercials.) When the video game companies start going at it, the ones who benefit the most are you and I. We get new games and improved hardware systems and a multitude of other gamish appliances. So it's with this in mind that I say, "You guys keep battling it out, we're fine here...just going along for the ride."

MOTOR TOON GRAND PRIX

SONY for PLAYSTATION

We're tiny, we're kawaii, we're altogether loony. Hey, look at me. I'm a sock. I was once what I've been smoked. Not a thing. It's just that this new game makes me feel all loony inside. Oh God, I can't stop myself, somebody has to pull the plug before... sorry, about that! Toon is the cool racing game where all the cars are like cartoons, not animated, which they are, but a sort, like in the Roger Rabbit movie. Back to the kart, you have five cars to chose from (I recommend Bentley), 11 different weapons if you have enough cash, and all the you have won all five races, you get a little something special. I won't tell because... I don't want to. It's a great game for all ages, including the adults.

—Todd Hoffer

VIRTUAL I-GLASSES!

VIRTUAL I-O INC.

Whats the next generation of video games going to be like you ask? Well check out Virtual Iglasses. This thing hooks u to any game system (Playstation, SEGA, Nintendo, etc.) or television (as long as you have RCA plug-ins), you can even hook them up to your PC, and that way no one can tell wh you're looking at on the internet. They have built-in headph for stereo sound. The sound is so great on these you could h a great whisper. So if you have ever wondered what it woul like to sit in front of a 90-inch screen with surround-sound, t this is the ticket for you. These glasses list for $399, and if y have the extra cash, they are well worth the price. One wo advise: if you do get a pair, tell your family good-bye, beca once you strap this on, nothing else matters.

TOBAL NO. 1
SONY for PLAYSTATION

...ond Hoffer sat down to play this game when ...first got it, I chose the robot warrior Horn, and he ...everyone else. I kicked his ass right ways to ...day. He wasn't so happy about it, so we switched ...h with Horn. I mauled everyone else. I got my ...kicked, but I took it better than Hoffer. What I'm say...ing here is that this is a pretty basic 3-D fighting game, and if you want to hand someone's ass to them in a fight, ...with Horn. Specifically, this game comes with a ...ooler disc of the game Final Fantasy VII, and it's not good. Just thought you'd want to know.

—Joseph P. Rybandt

MYST
PSYGNOSIS for PLAYSTATION

Finally, one of the best PC adventure games comes to the Playstation. Myst has been around for a while, but unless you have a computer at home, you couldn't enjoy this very addictive game. I'm not going to give away much about this game because this is really something you need to experience. That's right, I said EXPERIENCE, not play. With, Myst you must use your MINDI. Basically, you find a book entitled Myst, you thumb through it for a minute and before you know it, you're transported to a mysterious island. There's no time limit and no one to beat the crap out of, all there is for you to do is explore. Along the way, you come across items to help you in your journey and... Oh no you don't. I'm not telling any more—you have to experience it for yourself.

—Todd Hoffer

CRASH BANDICOOT
SONY for PLAYSTATION

Well, I've seen the commercials, have you? After playing Crash for the countless hours that I have, all I can say is "Bring it on plumber boy!!! I got your Princess right here!!!" This game is really a blast. You go jumping over cliffs, smashing into boxes, doing that wicked little spin move to clear your path of uncertainties, and just having a great time. With incredible 3D graphics and killer sound effects, you won't be disappointed. As the story goes, the evil scientist is brainwashing all the cutesy animals (my words, not his) on a small island off the Australian coast. Crash, after being kicked off the island after the attempted brainwashing, didn't want to rescue his babe Tawna! Before the good doctor can do his thing. Enough of that—the game play is fast and exciting with plenty of pitfalls (get it? Pit... falls...) anyway Crash is a definitely a stocking stuffer in my house this year, and it should be in yours. If you've got a slapped-around then roll a PLUMBER, be for a whacky good time, get a copy of Crash Bandicoot.

—Todd Hoffer

TWISTED METAL 2

SONY for PLAYSTATION

I've said it before with other games, but it's all been true; the first **Twisted Metal** was a game the **FAN** staff played any chance they got...now comes **Twisted Metal 2**. They've really gone all out...it's a whole new game altogether. The battle can be fought anywhere, against any opponent - Los Angeles, Paris (where you get to blow up the Eiffel Tower), Moscow, Antarctica, New York (where taking on the Statue of Liberty reveals quite a bit about our nation's symbol of liberty), and more. The only repeat vehicles are Roadkill, Thumper, Warthog, Spectre, and Mr. Grimm. The rest are new editions including my favorite: the man with two wheels strapped to his arms and one of the most devastating special weapons to be had...Axel! But you find your own favorite out of the rest. **TM2** gives you character bios and weapons stats before you make your final choice. This game is pure carnage on the road...and that's what it's all about.

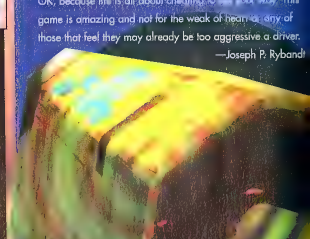
—Joseph P. Rybandt

WIPEOUT XL

SONY for PLAYSTATION

I'm going to say this very calmly and then I want you to get me some help...MY RETINAS ARE FRIED! All I can see is the course. All I feel is the vibration of the machine as I race for the #1 slot. Each course is a lesson in progressive and difficulty. The very soothing thing about this game is the soundtrack by ambient/dub/techno/electronic recording artists. It's a seething, rhythmic sound that plays as you're forgetting the guy in front and hoping you put him down for the count. I never paid much attention to the first versions of Wipeout...no other playing this. I went back and gave it a spin...it doesn't like it as compared to the speed of XL. I found the Auricom Research vehicle to be the easiest all-around racer. However, of course this didn't get me #1 as I tried to advance past the bikes to no avail. I had to restart (with the help of some pad and game guide cheats). But that's OK, because life is all about cheating to get your way. This game is amazing and not for the weak of heart vs. any of those that feel they may already be too aggressive a driver.

—Joseph P. Rybandt

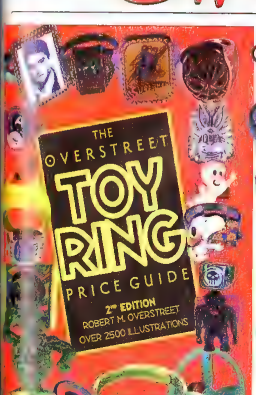


Special Christmas Bonus:

For those of you playing **Wipeout XL** here's a little code to take you to the PHANTOM Class. Good Luck. **BOBAOANBHAANOO**. Enjoy!

As with most of our year-end columns, we like to tell you what we feel to be the best thing that has come out this year. Since it's just Joe and myself doing the game reviews, the list won't be long. Joe's favorite game of 1996 is **MARIO 64**. And for myself it's a tie: **CRASH BANDICOOT** and **BOGEY DEAD SIX**. Why do I get to choose two and Joe only one, you ask? Because I'm in charge here by God, and I'll do what I want! ha,ha,ha!ha,ha,ha,ha!ha!

4,000 RING CIRCUS!



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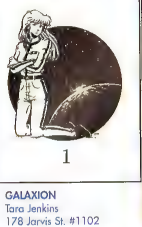
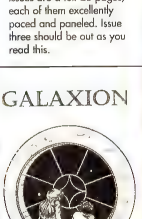


GALAXION
Tara Jenkins
178 Jarvis St. #1102
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M5B 2K7
#1-3, $1.50 each
One of the best science fiction comics currently being published, **Galaxion** is tremendously well drawn and told in a casually well-plotted style. The story of Aria and the rest of the crew of the Galaxion who return to our solar system and find an Earth reduced to rubble, this book pulls off what most sci-fi comics can't even get close to: It successfully balances the focus between the sci-fi aspects of the plot and the personal aspects of the main characters. Tara Jenkins' art here is extremely well detailed and smooth, sort of a cross between **Wandering Star** and *Sailor Moon*, and issues are a full 20 pages, each of them excellently paced and paneled. Issue three should be out as you read this.



AXEL-N-ALEX
Terry Flippo
205 Breezewood Ct.
Mt. Airy, MD 21771
#1-2, $2.00 each
It all started in Roswell, New Mexico, back in 1947. Only in this case, a nine foot tall robot was what the government recovered from the UFO crash there and now it's woken up and escaped to become the protector of 12-year-old Alex. Why Alex is so important remains to be seen, but it's already been a lot of fun getting there. **Axel-N-Alex** is drawn in a classical comics style, with the lay-out and robot designs reminiscent of old **Flash Gordon**. Terry Flippo's story, however, takes place on this planet, and the interaction between robot and boy are clever and very nineties. With a cord-stock cover and 24 pages an issue, this is a bargain at $2.00.

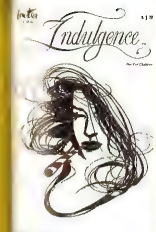
SELF SERVICE

Instead of focusing on one self-published comic this month, since it's the year end issue, I'm going to take a look at some of the highlights in mini comic publishing this year. Like the books I normally cover, mini-comics are self-published and very often better than many mainstream, full-sized comics. Most mini-comics are staple bound and measure 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", making them about the same size as most astrocan comics. Where astrocans are often previews of upcoming full-size comics, however, mini-comics are the actual comics themselves, usually printed in black and white and anywhere from 12 to 48 pages.

The advantages to publishing your work as a mini comic is that it costs less to publish, you usually don't worry about going through a distributor, and a good way to develop a readership, as the low printing costs keep the cover price low for curious readers. Plus, it can be an excellent way to get your comic known before you make the jump to a full-sized book and a distributor. A number of successful, critically acclaimed books started out as minis, including **Optic Nerve** and **Too Much Coffee Man**.

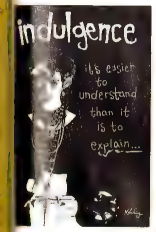
More mini-comics came out in a year than I can possibly keep track of, but these are some of the best (in no particular order) that I've seen over the last 12 months. Don't be afraid to take a chance on these books—they don't cost much and you'll be surprised at just how good they are.

TALES OF THE PATHETIC CLUB
Troy Hickman
906 S. 18th St
Lafayette, IN 47905
#1-3 $1.00 each
One of the most well-written comics, mini, maxi, or anywhere in between, **Tales of the Pathetic Club** is a book that will stay with you for a long time. Complete in three issues, this is the story of Dr. Edward Stein and his study of various people and their manias, as told through his journal entries. Thing is, the good Doctor becomes a little too wrapped up in his subjects, becoming oblivious to his disintegrating marriage and his own fragile mental state. The artists vary from issue to issue, with Sean Bieri's work in #3 the best of the bunch. The characters and manias created here show Troy Hickman has either done a lot of research or has a few manias of his own.



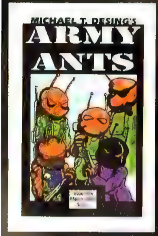
INDULGENCE
Marc Ludena/Shawn Spurlock
1437 Hillcrest Place
Apt. #2nd
Aurora, IL 60505
#1-3, $1.50 each

Though only one issue comes out every other year or less, **Indulgence** is worth tracking down. Marc Ludena's art, especially in issue #3, is very stylistic and vaguely reminiscent of Dave McKean's work on **Cages**, presenting the slightly poetic stories well. Even the lettering is detailed and appropriate to the story. It's the small details like that which make this an engrossing book. Yes, I know, wise-guy Shawn Spurlock contributes to our market reports, but he's only one of the writers on this fine mini. And at a big 28 pages, this is a good deal.



HEEP
Glenn Barr
307 West 6th St. #209
Royal Oak, MI, 48067
#1-2, $4.00 each

Okay, four bucks is a lot for any comic, mini or otherwise, but this is the most well packaged mini-comic I've ever seen. With a thick, two-color card-stock cover, sepia-toned pages, and the best black and white reproduction you'll see anywhere, **Heep** is actually worth the money. Basically a gallery of Glenn Barr's amazing art done for ads, posters, CD designs, and t-shirts, this book is eye-candy of the highest order. Back when I lived in Northwest Ohio, I used to see Glenn's art all over the pages of the Detroit free weekly paper and wonder what this guy was doing. Now I know.



ARMY ANTS
Michael T. Desing
P.O. Box 866
West Seneca, NY 14224
#1-4, $1.50 each

Michael Desing's book is a perfect example of how mini-comics can be helpful to self-publishers. Through each issue, his art improves, as his lines become smoother and his pages more interesting to the eye. His story becomes more engrossing as well, as his main characters, a military of ants at war with hornets and possibly spiders, begin to take on personality and draw you in. The book has garnered a well-deserved following and Michael is making the move with issue #5 to standard comic book size. But his mini-comic output this year is an excellent introduction to the series.

REVENGE COMICS
Brett Lewis and Kevin McCarthy
6230 Wilshire Blvd.
Suite 1808
Los Angeles, CA 90048
#1, $1.00 each

Revenge Comics is something of an anthology featuring work by Kevin McCarthy and Brett Lewis, two artists whose styles are very different, but who both produce great work. Lewis, with his scratchy, George Pratt-ish ony, tells pained, rough-cut tales that leave you feeling a little empty inside, while McCarthy's pop style presents a wilder world that reminds one of Paul Pope's best work. Maria T. Sanchez also publishes the kinetic **Bubble Gun** under the **Revenge Comics** banner, a much lighter book. Though these books are short, they work well and leave you wanting more.

B-36
Pam Bliss
P. O. Box 304
Valparaiso, IN 46384
#1, $1.50 each

Pam Bliss has been making mini-comics for longer than I've been writing about comics. One of her big offerings this year was **B-36**, a 40-page hunk of mini-comic that will show you why she's so popular among comic fans. A collection of pieces all told in her welcoming, friendly, and detailed art style, **B-36** is simply a good read for any comic fan and the biggest bargain on this list. Chances are, Pam may even throw in one of her huge catalogs of her work. Whether relating the stories of killer pigeons, her own life, or adventures in Alaska, these stories are interesting and well-paced.

So there you are. Do these creators and yourself a favor and give at least one of these books a shot. Then write them back and let them know what you thought. And don't hesitate to write me while you're at it—I'd like to know if you thought I was way off base or if you agreed, as well as whether or not I should do this again next year. And, as always, if you're self-publishing a full-size or a mini-comic and you wish someone would notice, I'm the guy to go to. Send a couple copies and an old Thundercats figure to Toph the Self Service Guy, Overstreet's FAN, 1966 Greenspring Drive, Suite 405, Timonium, MD, 21093. No one sent me anything but their books this time and now they're famous anyway! That's just the kind of guy I am.

indy side bar

THE AWAKENING
Kitchen Sink

Stephen Blue's new book from Kitchen Sink is one of the more interesting books to appear from that already eclectic publisher. Told in black and white and the first issue of what will be a five-issue mini-series, **The Awakening** is an excellent beginning that will leave you wanting to see more.

The story of Rachel, who has been seriously injured in some way immediately preceding the start of the book, the first issue follows her battle back from near-death. This state of unconsciousness is in turns portrayed as a thick forest, a temple full of mutated thugs, and a deep well into which Rachel dives. At the bottom of this well, she finds a sunken car, inside of which she finds a ring, which proves to be the key to her awakening.

Blue shows us what's happening around Rachel's unconscious body as well, detailing the operation and the mysterious visitor who slips into her hospital room. He appears to be the same stranger, however, who follows her into the well in her unconscious dream. This is only the first hint at a blurring between the conscious and the unconscious, between the dream state and the awakening.

A former Xeric Grant award-winner and creator of the graphic novel **Red River**, Blue's art here is excellent, as his lines are crisp and the separation of tones exceptional. The unconscious scenes in the temple are as detailed as a 17th century woodcut, and the stark contrasts that appear once Rachel wakes up are crisp and do much to delineate this as the waking world. The story itself moves quickly, perhaps due to the sparse dialogue. But this is a plus, as it adds to the suspense and mystery.

By the end of issue one, you'll have plenty of questions about Rachel and her mysterious visitor. I'm certainly looking forward to seeing how inventively they might be resolved.

—Toph

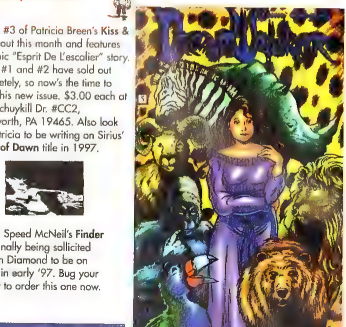
SELF SERVICE Update

Six months have passed, and it's time for another update on the creators and books that have appeared in Self Services past. It is the holiday season, after all, and there's no better time to catch up with old friends....

•Steven Gilbert's sequel of sorts to **I Had a Dream** will be out in the Spring. He's calling it **Gardenback**, and it's the first of many annuals centered around the world and the characters he created in **I Had a Dream**. Look for a solicitation soon.

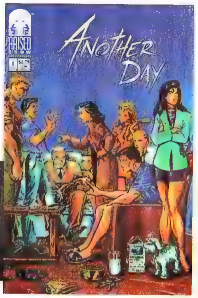
•Issue #3 of Patricia Breen's **Kiss & Tell** is out this month and features her epic "Esprit De L'escalier" story. Issues #1 and #2 have sold out completely, so now's the time to grab this new issue. $3.00 each at 850 Schuylkill Dr. #CC2, Kenilworth, PA 19465. Also look for Patricia to be writing on Sirius' **Crypt of Dawn** title in 1997.

•Andrew Ford's relaunch of **Rib** #1 shipped in November with a full-color cover by Stan Sakai. Issue #2 should be out this month, with #3 in February and featuring a cover by **Sandman Mystery Theater**'s Guy Davis. Future cover artists include Shannon Wheeler and Drew Hayes. Order from P.O. Box 168, Flaconer, NY 14733 ($3).



•Jenni Gregory's excellent **Dreamwalker** has been picked up by Caliber and added to their Tapestry line of comics. The new **Dreamwalker** #1 is out this month and features a whole new story, with #2 to follow in February.

•Carla Speed McNeil's **Finder** #1 is finally being solicited through Diamond to be on stands in early '97. Bug your retailer to order this one now.



•**Another Day** #2 is out this month from Mario Miranda, with #3 slated for March. Look for both of these books to deal with the main character's other powers start to manifest themselves, catching him off guard. #4 and #5 will take a lighter tone, as we see why Paul will never become a superhero.

Max & Lily

•**Manya** co-creator Kris Dresen has her own creation, **Max & Lilly**, just out, featuring more of the amazing art you can find in **Manya**. This first **Max & Lilly** is a collection of strips that Dresen has done over the past year. Order a copy for $2.00 from 2300 N. Claybourn Ave. Suite #2, Chicago, IL, 60614. **Manya** #4 is scheduled to be released in March

"Twelve"

AVENGELYNE / WARRIOR NUN AREALA #1
MAXIMUM PRESS

CROSSOVERS, CROSSOVERS, AND YET, ANOTHER CROSSOVER. THIS TIME IT'S TWO WOMAN OF GOD FIGHTING THE DEMONS OF HELL. THAT'S RIGHT! OUR CLEVER FRIEND ROB LIEFELD HAS COMBINED THE FALLEN ANGEL, AVENGELYNE, AND THE TOUGHEST NUN, AREALA, TO CONQUER THE EVIL SOJOURN IN A WHOLE NEW TIME-TWISTING TALE. SOJOURN TELEPORTS AREALA INTO NEW YORK WHERE AVENGELYNE HAS JUST FINISHED FIGHTING OFF POWER-HUNGRY DEMONS. THEN SOJOURN TIME TRAVELS OUR HEROES AND HIM-SELF INTO THE JAPAN OF THE FUTURE. ROBOT POLICE, FLYING CONTRAPTIONS, SUSHI, ALL THE THINGS THAT THE FUTURE HOLDS. I CAN'T EVEN FIND THE WORDS TO DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT. THIS IS NOT YOUR AVERAGE GOOD GUY/BAD GUY SCENARIO. IT'S FUN-FILLED ACTION TO THE MAX COMBINING THE TALENTED PENCILS OF DAN FRAGA AND MICHAEL CHANG, THIS CROSSOVER SPRINGS INTO ACTION. HURRY TO YOUR LOCAL COMIC STORE TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENS BEFORE TIME RUNS OUT.

- CATHY DISBROW

IT'S A GOOD LIFE, IF YOU DON'T WEAKEN
A PICTURE NOVELLA BY SETH
DRAWN & QUARTERLY

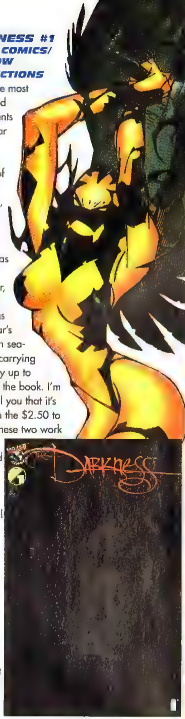
Every once and a while a comic comes out that transcends the medium and becomes literature, not only in words, but in art as well. Seth's **It's A Good Life, If You Don't Weaken** (a story collected from **Palooka-Ville** #4-9) is one of those books. It's the story of a man, Seth, on an obsessive search for an obscure illustrator named Kalo. However, it's also a story about a man on a search for himself. As Seth tracks down information on Kalo, he is really on a journey of self-discovery, artistically and emotionally. In the end, the discoveries he makes about Kalo's life reveal what Seth's life could be, if he allows it—a semi-successful cartoonist who peaked out, returned home, got married, and turned his back on his art. Seth's illustrations perfectly reflect his interest in older **New Yorker** cartoonists, even the yellowed pages of the book help the reader to see through Seth's eyes. His backgrounds convey mood better than anyone currently drawing, his characterization is sharper than most (creating believable characters instead of caricatures), and his storytelling ability is of the highest caliber. **It's A Good Life, If You Don't Weaken** stands as a marker for what comics can achieve.

—Benn Ray

THE DARKNESS #1
IMAGE COMICS/ TOP COW PRODUCTIONS

One of the most anticipated comic events of this year is finally here. The teaming of Garth (Preacher, Hitman) Ennis and Marc Silvestri has caused quite a stir, from the beginnings of this year's convention season, and carrying all the way up to release of the book. I'm here to tell you that it's well worth the $2.50 to see how these two work together. It's a good read and Silvestri's art is up to its usual par. Although with all the time off he's had from comic work, one would argue that he should have grown some—artistically that is. Ennis is right on the mark as usual, mixing humor with death and violence (a little sex thrown in for good measure as well) for a pleasing affect. Our main character, Jackie Estacado, is a mob enforcer who whacks guys for a living. Living within him, set to manifest on his 21st Birthday, is the Darkness Power. Of course, there are two sides looking to use the wielder of the Darkness for their own gain—this is a comic book after all. But as the issue, and the games, progress, I've got a feeling that they can keep this ball rolling.

—Joseph P. Rybandt



GEN 13 #13 A B C
IMAGE COMICS/WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS

IT'S NOT REALLY A CROSSOVER KIDS, BUT THERE ARE GUEST STARS GALORE IN THIS "ANNIVERSARY" ISSUE OF *GEN 13*. BRANDON CHOI, J. SCOTT CAMPBELL, AND JIM LEE HAVE COOKED UP SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FOR THE KIDS. THERE HASN'T BEEN A BETTER DREAM SEQUENCE SINCE TWIN PEAKS. RENDERED UNCONSCIOUS BY SOME BAD BURGERS, (OR WAS IT AN EVIL COMIC BOOK? SAY, CAN THERE BE SUCH A THING AS AN EVIL COMIC BOOK?) OUR BOY GRUNGE TAKES A MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR AROUND THE LAND OF SEQUENTIAL ART. ISSUE A INTRODUCES US TO: ARCHIE, BETTY & VERONICA, JUGHEAD, AND REGGIE. YES, KIDS, THE ARCHIES IN *GEN 13*. NEXT ON OUR GUEST LIST INCLUDES: THE TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES, BONE AND THOSE STUPID STUPID RAT CREATURES, THE BEANS FROM BEAN WORLD, THE LIL' DVBS, JIM LEE, SPAWN, MADMAN, THE MAXX, SHI, FRANCINE AND KATCHOO FROM *STRANGERS IN PARADISE*, MONKEY MAN AND O'BRIEN, HELLBOY, WOLVERINE, (YES THAT WOLVERINE), AND ANTHONY ROBBINS, SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR. INHALE. EXHALE. NOW WE CAN CONTINUE. I DIDN'T GET THE ANTHONY ROBBINS GUEST SPOT EITHER. ANYWAY, *GEN 13* #13 IS A TALE OF GREED, LUST, AND COMIC BOOKS. WHO SAYS ART DOESN'T IMITATE LIFE?
ALSO CHECK OUT THOSE AMAZING SIMILARITIES BETWEEN SOME OF THE GUEST STARS AND THEIR "REAL" WORLD COUNTERPARTS.

- JEFF DILLON

P.S. HMM, 3 ISSUES FOR ONE ISSUE, COULD THIS BE, BEST GIMMICK ACCORDING TO THE *FAN AWARDS*? AND IT'S ON NEWSPRINT. THE WAY GOD INTENDED. AND EACH ISSUE IS ONLY $1.38! GET IT? $1.38, THIRTEEN, ONE THREE. AWW, I GIVE UP...

KABUKI: SKIN DEEP
CALIBER COMICS

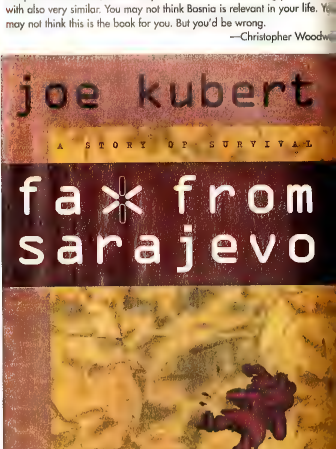
David Mack kicks off his newest **Kabuki** mini-series with a bang, as Kabuki is apparently discovered dead in the middle of the Control Corps facility by her Noh compatriots, Siamese. Control Corps is something of a rogue government agent rehab/protection center that found Kabuki nine months before this opening scene. As a bomb goes off in the present (the aforementioned bang), the scene shifts back nine months to Kabuki's first day in the facility. At Control Corps, Kabuki is without her mask and is forced to face issues of her identity and her past—just the things that Kabuki fans have been wanting to know more about since day one. Three artists work on this first issue, as Daniel Cabuco takes Scene 1, Vince Locke Scene 2, and Mack himself takes Scene 3. Not surprisingly, Mack's art is the most detailed and strongest of the three, as he seems to experiment with paneling, hue, and mixed media to create some beautiful work. In all, if the rest of the series can fulfill the promise of this first issue, this will be the best **Kabuki** series yet

—Christopher Woodward

FAX FROM SARAJEVO
DARK HORSE BOOKS

I have to admit, I had lost whatever degree of familiarity I may have had with the war in Bosnia until I read this. And then it all came back: the distance I felt from the situation, the callousness with which the television and newspapers reported upon it, and the way in which it was *marketed* to seem, at first, like something that shouldn't have concerned the U.S. Once the ethnic cleansing and other atrocities were brought to light, once the comparisons were made between Bosnia and Hitler's Germany, a horror we could all understand, however, the U.S. finally become involved. Pardon my rant. But after reading **Fax From Sarajevo**, you'll feel a little angry as well. Joe Kubert's story of his friend Ervin Rustemagic's battle to get his family out of war-torn Sarajevo is powerful and moving in ways that the best comics or novels rarely come close to. Kubert's presentation of the story is excellent, as he interweaves the actual text from his friend's faxes along with his own drawn interpretations of the whole very true story. It's difficult not to make comparisons to **Maus**, as the subject is similar and the feeling you're left with also very similar. You may not think Bosnia is relevant in your life. You may not think this is the book for you. But you'd be wrong.

—Christopher Woodward



ATOMIC CITY TALES #1-2
KITCHEN SINK COMIX

SUPERHEROES SITTING AROUND PLAYING SCRABBLE!? SUPERHEROES AT A PARTY!? *ATOMIC CITY TALES* TAKES ON SUPERHERO MYTHOLOGY AND HANGS IT OUT TO DRY. FROM SIDEKICKS TO GIRLFRIENDS, SUPERVILLIANS TO ROCK BANDS, WRITER/ARTIST JAY STEPHENS GIVES US A NEW WAY TO "LOOK UP IN THE SKY." NOT SINCE MADMAN HAS THERE BEEN SUCH A UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE ON THE SUPERHERO GENRE. OUR HEROES, BIG BANG AND FRIENDS, TAKE THE ARCHETYPE AND MAKE IT THE ARCHETYPICAL. ALL THIS AND THERE'S A PLOT TOO. WITH GREAT ART AND GREAT STORY, ALL IT REALLY NEEDS IS A SOUNDTRACK.

- JEFF DILL

BATMAN/WILDCAT #1
DC COMICS

[illegible] CROC BEATS THE LIVING [illegible] OUTTA SOME FUNK DRESSED [illegible] IN A WILDCAT COSTUME. [illegible] AND JOE!! [illegible] MAN AND ROBIN ENTER THE [illegible] SCENE. [illegible] AS [illegible] ENTER THE MAN WHO TAUGHT THE BATMAN HOW TO FIGHT...TED GRANT, THE WILDCAT, A GRIZZLED VETERAN [illegible] IN THE WAR AGAINST CRIME. *BATMAN/WILDCAT #1* HAS ALL THE [illegible] - DOWN, DRAG OUT, ACTION [illegible] EXPECT FROM THE WRITING [illegible] TEAM OF BEAU SMITH AND CHUCK [illegible] BETWEEN THESE TWO, HALF [illegible] THE UNIVERSE STILL HAVE [illegible] AND NOW THEY GIVE GOTHAM CITY A FAT LIP. THIS ONE'S [illegible] ABOUT MEN BEATING EACH OTHER [illegible] DEATH. IT'S ABOUT MEN IN TIGHTS [illegible] TRYING TO STOP THOSE MEN FROM [illegible] BEATING EACH OTHER TO DEATH. IT'S [illegible] VIOLENT AND NASTY. THE WAY REAL [illegible] MEN LIKE THEIR COMICS. STILL [illegible] BLEEDING WHEN YOU CUT INTO 'EM, [illegible] BREAK OUT THE BAND-AIDS, THIS [illegible] GONNA HURT. [illegible] DING DING...THAT'S THE START [illegible] ROUND ONE

- JEFF DILLON

STRANGERS IN PARADISE VOLUME 3 #1
HOMAGE COMICS

Finally! It's little late.. and in COLOR!?!?! Just kidding, I knew it was gonna be in color the whole time. Anyone out there that believes in the *purity* of black and white should really just settle down...we live in a world full of color after all. I like the book; it's set up a future for Francine and Katchoo that makes the story taking place in the present that much more interesting. We even get a little taste of the superhero as Francine has a dream of the old meeting the new. I think that the move to Homage is one of the best things Terry could have done—wider audience, better production, and hopefully on time delivery, these are all the perks of the big studios. The work being done here could have either come from Homage or Terry's own Abstract. It's the story that matters. Everybody just settle down, end this useless debate over the move to a bigger publisher, and enjoy this series

—Joseph P. Rybandt

HEARTS OF AFRICA VOL. II: TRIALS
SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS

Welcome to a land where fire ripping across the plains is viewed by people much in the same way we watch TV. This is a place where if the water isn't properly boiled before you drink it, it could kill you, where tanks could drive through your house at a moment's notice, where practicing witchcraft is a jailable offense, where a dust storm is the equivalent of a blizzard, and where a case of appendicitis can prove deadly. No, this isn't some distant planet or alternate dimension, it's Africa. This volume collects issues 4-7 of **Tales from the Heart**, Cindy Goff's autobiographical account of her time in the Peace Corps. Writers Goff and Rafael Nieves and illustrators Seitu Hayden and Aldin Baroza do a masterful job of presenting the cultural conflict of young Americans encountering alien societies. For those of you who are so ethnocentric that you believe you have to read sci-fi to experience something truly alien, read this tale. What the character of Cathy and her friends experience as they try to make the world a better place is as wondrous, entertaining, and dramatic as any movie involving the word "Star" in the title; actually, more so since this is REAL.

—Benn Roy

BONE READER: THE MAKING OF THE FIRST TRILOGY

CARTOON BOOKS

YAHOO! FINALLY A BOOK ABOUT *BONE* THAT BRINGS US INTO THE HEAD OF JEFF SMITH. THIS FUN-FILLED COLLECTION OF PENCILS, STRIPS, AND SKETCHES SHOWS US THE PROCESS OF CREATING A STORY LIKE *BONE*. JEFF SMITH ADDS THOUGHTS AND EXPLAINS THE STORY BEHIND THE FIRST TWENTY-TWO COMICS. "THERE'S ALWAYS BEEN A SINGLE STORY TO *BONE*, AND THE FIRST TRILOGY IS ACT ONE," WE ALSO FIND OUT THAT THE BONE COUSINS ARE CHARACTERS THAT HAVE BEEN AROUND SINCE JEFF SMITH WAS IN KINDERGARTEN. AMAZING! "I REMEMBER REALLY LIKING THESE DRAWINGS I JUST MADE. THAT'S GOING TO BE MY CHARACTER," I THOUGHT." THE BOOK IS ARRANGED IN AN ENTERTAINING, EASY TO FOLLOW STYLE THAT EVERYONE IS GOING TO BE THRILLED ABOUT. OH YEAH, THERE'S ALSO A REALLY COOL FLIP BOOK IN THE TOP RIGHT CORNER. RUN *BONE* BONE, RUN!" EVEN IF YOU AREN'T FAMILIAR WITH *BONE*, JEFF MAKES SURE HE EXPLAINS ENOUGH SO YOU WILL WANT TO PICK UP THE OTHER THREE BOOKS. A DEFINITE WORTH-WHILE ADDITION FOR YOUR COLLECTION.

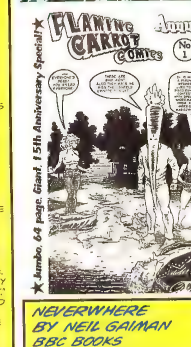
- CATHY DISBROW

CRYPT OF DAWN #1

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT/ANGRY CHRIST COMICS

Linsner rolls out another of his pretentious anthologies on the nature of birth, love, death, and everything in-between. Dawn returns to her original role as ghost host, and, apart from Linsner's self-indulgences, the book is not all bad. The most intriguing of the three stories featured is the only one not written by Linsner. Soon to be a new title from Sirius, Robb Horan's "Tombstone Girls" is a preview that actually leaves you wanting more and introduces a group of models with a mysterious, magical destiny. The art by Saverio Tenuta, whose work was previously showcased in **Dolls**, has a chilling edge that enhances the mood. As for Linsner, he still draws some of the most enticing women in comic history, and his vampire tale, "Vicariosity," puts a nice spin on a very old genre. Horan may steal the show as far as story-telling, but over-all, it's a pleasant enough read.

—Arnold T. Blumberg



FLAMING CARROT COMICS ANNUAL NO. 1

DARK HORSE COMICS

After years on hiatus, Flaming Carrot is back to celebrate his 15-year anniversary. Step into Bob Burden's non-linear world of the bizarre. See the Carrot get cold-cocked by an over-zealous nerve, revel with glee as he kills a clever vampire, call your friends and let them know what a ladies' man he is, and join him on a quest for the lost pork chop mine. If you like transitions, this isn't the book for you. But if you want to see the comic equivalent of a chaos machine, grab up Burden's return to Carrot-ville. It's weird, it's wacky, it's a romp. But after being gone for so many years, will people remember Flaming Carrot? And if they do, will they care, especially when so many other companies are (unintentionally) telling the same type of nonsensical stories with their superheroes?

—Benn R

NEVERWHERE BY NEIL GAIMAN

BBC BOOKS

WHEN I HEARD THAT NEIL GAIMAN WAS TAKING A BREAK FROM COMICS TO DO SOME BRITISH TELEVISION, THE ONLY THING THAT I KEPT THINKING TO MYSELF WAS, "OH BOY, ANOTHER SPACE CASES!! BUT WHEN I GOT *MY* HANDS ON GAIMAN'S NOVELIZATION OF THE SERIES *NEVERWHERE*, IT MADE ME ALMOST WISH THAT I LIVED ACROSS THE POND" SO I TOO COULD WATCH IT ON THE TELLY! READING A LITTLE LIKE HIS *GOOD OMENS* (HIS NOVEL WITH TERRY PRATCHETT), *NEVERWHERE* TELLS THE STORY OF RICHARD MAYHEW, AN UPWARDLY MOBILE BUSINESSMAN WHO'S GOT IT MADE. HE'S YOUNG, HAS HIS OWN FLAT, AND EVEN MANAGED TO GET ENGAGED TO THE BOSS' DAUGHTER. WHAT ELSE COULD A GUY WANT? ENTER DOOR ONE OF THE "INVISIBLE AND IGNORED" CITIZENS OF *NEVERWHERE*, THE CITY UNDERNEATH LONDON. CHASED BY TWO THUGS WHO EAT PRECIOUS ART AND PEOPLE FOR BREAKFAST (LITERALLY), THEY WANT TO FINISH HER OFF LIKE THEY DID HER FAMILY. DOOR, YOU SEE, HAS INHERITED A VERY SPECIAL GIFT THAT ALLOWS HER TO CREATE AND "OPEN" DOORS TO ANYWHERE, FROM THIS GIFT FLOWS HER THREAT TO THE THUGS' EMPLOYER HENCE, THE HUNT IS ON. NOT TO GIVE TOO MUCH AWAY, MUCH MAYHEM ENSUES WITH MAYHEW TRYING TO SAVE DOOR, WHILE AT THE SAME TYME, TO HIS DETRIMENT, BECOMING A DENIZEN HIMSELF OF THE CITY BENEATH.

WITH *NEVERWHERE*, GAIMAN HAS CREATED A WORLD OF THE FANTASTIC, A WORLD WHERE THE HORRID AND THE HILARIOUS ARE JUST A BREATH AWAY FROM EACH OTHER. COMBINING THE HUMOR OF MONTY PYTHON WITH THE MAGIC OF THE BROTHERS GRIMM, *NEVERWHERE* IS NO *SANDMAN* IT'S BETTER.

- SCOTT BRA

ROLLERCOASTER #1
PANTAGRAPHICS

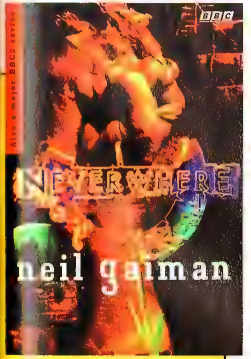
It's tough when you can't get to sleep, your mind starts to go wacky. You become agitated, paranoid and you hallucinate. That's exactly what happens to the female pizza delivery driver in "Apocalyptic Insomnia," the first story in Rich **(Clover Honey)** Tommaso's new series. She throws her younger brother down a flight of stairs, she thinks everybody at work hates her, and she kills a frog. However, like many people, she still feels a sense of obligation and duty to a job that is screwing her over (such is the nature of business). She is almost zombie-like, walking through a haze of work and no-sleep—bound by obligation to an employer who has no obligation to her. And just as she's finally about to get some sleep, they call her into work. When she arrives, she discovers that the position that she wants (pizza maker) has been filled by somebody else (even though the boss knows she's the best employee he has). Aside from his deliberate and effective pacing—which is used expertly to create a mood or set a scene—you know that Tommaso has spent his share of sleepless nights. It's only the first issue, and already it's clear that **rollercoaster** could fill the void left by **Love & Rockets**—maybe it's the magazine-sized format, Tommaso's solid and sure characterizing linework, the strong lead female character, or the Italian-American back-up story.

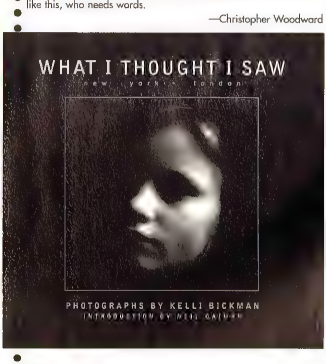
—Benn Ray

WHAT I THOUGHT I SAW
YATRA/11:11 STUDIO

The first book by New York photographer/artist Kelli Bickman, **What I Thought I Saw** is a collection of more than 50 black and white photographs taken in New York and London. The book will appeal to comic fans as many of the London shots were taken on the set of Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere* BBC2 television series, and Gaiman himself writes the introduction to the book. Bickman herself is assistant to comic author Chris Claremont when she's not taking pictures, painting, or assembling art in her studio. Her photographs in this collection are uniquely hers, capturing those specific aspects of her subjects that illustrate their personalities most succinctly. Bickman's studio work is even more affecting, as pieces like "Candy Cane" and "A Princess and a Queen" leave enough in the shadows and to the imagination to make them powerfully attractive without being heavy handed. Gaiman's introduction goes a long way towards giving the reader a mental portrait of Bickman that's in sync with the mood her photos create, just as Bickman's shots of Gaiman present him in a manner consistent with his comic work. In Bickman's After Words, she claims she's not much of a writer; whether that's true or not, with photography like this, who needs words.

—Christopher Woodward





FAN FAVE IS OF 1996

SINCE THIS IS OUR YEAR-END ISSUE, WE DECIDED TO TAKE A LOOK BACK. THESE BOOKS WERE MOST CONSISTENTLY, MONTH AFTER MONTH, OUR FAVES. THIS LIST IS NOT BASED ON DEMAND, RARITY, OR PRICE SPECULATION; THIS LIST SIMPLY COMPRISES THE BOOKS THAT MAKE IT TO THE TOP OF OUR READING STACKS FOR THE YEAR. SO PLEASE, NO WAGERING. JUST LOOK AT THIS AS THE FAN RECOMMENDED READING LIST FOR 1996.

1. **STARMAN** - DC
2. **THE BATMAN & ROBIN ADVENTURES** - DC
3. **FLASH** - DC
4. **PREACHER** - DC/VERTIGO
5. **MINIMUM WAGE** - FANTAGRAPHICS
6. **HITMAN** - DC
7. **UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN** - MARVEL
8. **HOUSE OF SECRETS** - DC/VERTIGO
9. **SIN CITY: THAT YELLOW BASTARD** - DARK HORSE
10. **SUPERMAN ADVENTURES** - DC
11. **DAREDEVIL** - MARVEL
12. **GENERATION X** - MARVEL
13. **BOOKS OF MAGIC** - DC/VERTIGO
14. **HELLBOY: WAKE THE DEVIL** - DARK HORSE
15. **BIRDS OF PREY: MANHUNT** - DC

LAST MINUTE SHOPPER'S GUIDE TO GRAPHIC NOVELS

Last year, our Christmas Shopper's Guide included **Marvels**, **Batman: The Dark Knight Returns**, **Sin City**, **Stray Bullets**, **Strangers in Paradise-Volume I**, *and* **Watchmen**. *Now, as time runs out on this Christmas season, here is our Last Minute Shopper's Guide to Graphic Novels. Because, after all, no better way to say "I love you" than with the gift of comics. Although last year's recommendations still apply, you may want to add these items to your list for those discerning, hard-to-please, or just plain confusing folks on your Christmas gift-giving season:*

FLASH: THE RETURN OF BARRY ALLEN
DC COMICS

For any superhero fan, a Marvel vs. DC crossover is an event not to be missed. Especially when the DC hero is the Flash, one of the most popular characters in the DC universe. Flash fans will love this story, which takes place in the 25th century, where Barry Allen's descendant, Wally West, is the Flash. Wally is a reckless, irresponsible hero who has no respect for the past. Barry Allen, on the other hand, is a stickler for rules and regulations. When Barry is accidentally transported to the 25th century, he is appalled by Wally's behavior. Wally, on the other hand, is thrilled to meet his hero. Wally's attempts to impress Barry with his heroics only serve to annoy Barry more. Eventually, Barry and Wally learn to work together to defeat the villain, Abra Kadabra. Fans of the Flash will enjoy this story, which is filled with humor and action. Even if you're not a Flash fan, you'll enjoy this book. Writer Mark Waid and artist Paul Ryan have created a fun, exciting story that is sure to please.

CAPTAIN AMERICA: OPERATION: RESCUE
MARVEL GRAPHIC NOVEL

Yes, it's another Mark Waid book, and next year this list will probably include a collected Kingdom Come, so you might as well make your peace with it now. In a run that spanned an all-too-brief eleven issues, Waid and artist Ron Garney revitalized Captain America. They gave the title a jump start and quickly brought it to the level of the Busiek/Perez/Immonen/Byrne/Stern glory days of a decade ago. Beginning with issue #434 (1994), in which Cap made only the smallest of cameos, Waid and Garney re-established Cap's rightful place within the pantheon of Marvel heroes. Cap's beloved allies can still be done with this character more than capable to all but the most jaded fans. The entire current run of the three two story arcs

BATMAN: HAUNTED KNIGHT
DC COMICS

For three years, Batman fans have been waiting for the next Batman: The Long Halloween maxi-series. Writer Jeph Loeb and artist Tim Sale dazzled readers with the criminally underrated Legends of the Dark Knight Halloween specials. Each issue was a stunning, self-contained tale exploring the origins, identity and purpose. With an act of terrorism the gap between the specials closed.

Batman: Year One and the purity of Batman's Adventures Tales series. Remember what can be done with a single comic. Together in this one volume, they make an argument for the best kind of any collection: take either of the two recommended items, this book or a subscription to give to a friend who has drifted away from comics. One read, and he/she will be back.

STRANGERS IN PARADISE: I DREAM OF YOU
ABSTRACT STUDIO

Starting with volume two, the first crossover of 1996, writer Jordan Terry Moore's second Strangers In Paradise collection (featuring issues #13-17 of Volume II) fans with a round succession of wrong-choiced situations for main characters Katchoo, Francine, and Tarquin. The less than in the third collection, still offering a cookie of characters with whom it's more than easy to get involved. Strongly held conflicting opinions and emotions spice up what becomes an increasingly dangerous and tense love-triangle. Moore often accompanies at times quite passionate challenging himself and his readers not to take the easy routes of cliches and stereotypes. Still sometimes to the point of inaccessibility to new readers and draws in many who might otherwise avoid comics.

WHY I HATE SATURN
DC COMIC/PARADOX PRESS

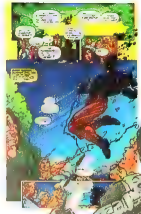
Unlike our other offerings, **Why I Hate Saturn** didn't come out in 1996, and it might be a little hasty to tout. That does not matter. What matters is the Bakers, savagely funny, sarcastic fans of a couple of outrageous friends in New York has made me laugh heavily here. I read it since its initial release in 1990. Paradox Press reissued it in a Kinkade Kwik imprint for the very cool way-weird cult that didn't remember the college-educated, generally working, disgruntled New Gen was worth a read. If you think you're young, hip, or have ever had a boss/friend/lover like this book, you're probably just young.

— J.C. Vaughn

production contest

THIS MONTH—X-FORCE

Have we got a prize for you! In his very first issue of **X-Force** (#44), artist Adam Pollina made a boo-boo. He accidentally drew Sunspot in costume when the script called for him to be in his civvies! Oh-no! Adam, being the trooper that he is, re drew the page for the final product. What this means to one lucky winner is that the original piece of art, with Sunspot in costume, will be yours if you're the big winner this month! Plus, as an added bonus, we wrestled the original script to **X-Force** #50 from the hands of writer Jeph Loeb. He even signed it! All you need to do is drop us a line telling us you want this fabulous prize, and if you're the name to come out of the hat...it's all yours.



Just send your entry to Gemstone Publishing, Inc., Behind the Scenes—X-Force Contest, 1966 Greenspring Drive, Suite 405, Timonium, MD, 21093.

No purchase necessary. All entries become the property of Gemstone Publishing, Inc. and cannot be returned. Entries must be received by March 1, 1997, which is the closing date of the contest. Winners will be selected no later than March 15, 1997. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received by Gemstone Publishing, Inc by the closing date of the contest. Normal FAN contest rules apply. All taxes, duties, and state fees are the responsibility of prize winner.
X-Force is ™ and © 1996, Marvel Comics.

unemployed looking & for Work

In 1972, Marvel Comics introduced the fiery red-headed jungle queen, Shanna the She-Devil. Jim Steranko's cover for issue #1 pretty much reveals (pun intended) the series' premise. Swinging Tarzan-like through the trees, dressed only in a leopard skin, Shanna was B-grade Hollywood jungle queen fare at it's finest. The plots were boringly predictable, serving only as vehicles for the artists to show as much of Shanna as the then still formidable Comics Code Authority would allow.

Yet writers Carole Sueling (and later Steve Gerber) occasionally gave readers tantalizing glimpses of the character's true potential. Shanna's origin is a dandy—emotional, troubling, and providing readers a clear understanding of her motivations and desires. Shanna is at her best with her twin leopards at her side, protecting the Dahomey Reserve in Africa from poachers, slavers, and ivory hunters. She's at her worst when working for S.H.E.I.L.D. or hanging out with her stereotypical Irish game warden boyfriend.

Issue #5 finds Shanna poised to examine her true nature, to find out if she truly is the Devil-Goddess that the natives believe her to be. With a cameo appearance by Professor Xavier and the 1st appearance of a mutant villain named Nekra, the suggestion is clear that there might be more to Shanna. Unfortunately, whatever that "more" might have been remains unknown, as issue #5 was the last.

A good creative team, building on the foundation already laid, could make a hit of Shanna the She-Devil. Hey Marvel, how 'bout giving a jungle girl another shot?

by Tony Starks

year end fanforecast

For those new to the game, each month in FAN we spotlight a book that has the potential to rise to the heights of comic-dom. Most of the time we're right, but we are by no means perfect. The following is a list of all the books that we Forecasted in 1996, complete with a ratings system of how well we did...play along at home!

ROT—RIGHT ON TARGET
SVC—SO VERY CLOSE
WOB—WAY OFF BASE

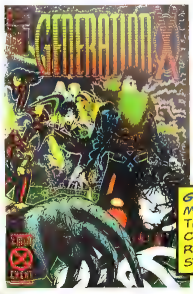
***BATMAN* #515**
DC COMICS
KELLEY JONES CONTINUES TO WOW READERS, BUT THIS BOOK SPOTLIGHTING HIS FIRST WORK ON THE BAT NEEDS TO STAY SETTLED FOR THE LONG HAUL! *SVC*

***FLASH SPECIAL* #1**
DC COMICS
WE THOUGHT THAT JOHN FOX, THE FLASH-OF-THE-FUTURE, MIGHT BE AROUND FOR LONGER THAN HE WAS...WE WERE WRONG. *WOB*

***GEN 13* #1 (ONGOING SERIES)**
IMAGE COMICS/WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS
DO YOU REALLY NEED AN EXPLANATION? *ROT*

***HELLBLAZER* #91**
DC COMICS
THE FIRST TIME A MOSTLY MAINSTREAM AUDIENCE WAS INTRODUCED TO THE WORK OF GARTH ENNIS...MAYBE YOU'VE HEARD OF HIM? *ROT*

***THE DEMON ANNUAL* #2**
DC COMICS
THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE LATEST COMIC BAD-BOY FROM GARTH ENNIS AND ARTIST JOHN MCCREA. WE CALLED THIS WAAAY BEFORE ANYONE ELSE! *ROT*



***GENERATION X* #1**
MARVEL COMICS
THE YOUNGER SIDE OF THE *X-MEN* CONTINUES TO DELIGHT AND AMUSE READERS OF ALL AGES. THIS IS THE START. *ROT*

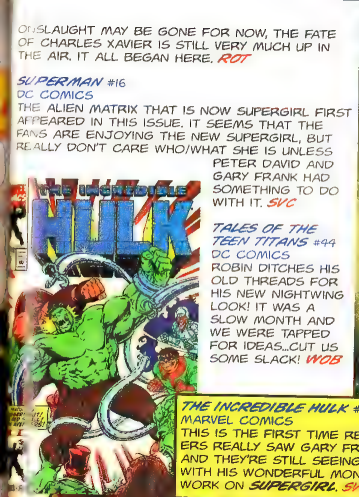
***KURT BUSIEK'S ASTRO CITY* #1**
IMAGE COMICS
WITH THE NEW SERIES REACHING A MUCH-DESERVED LARGER AUDIENCE, LOOK FOR THE EARLY ISSUES OF THIS SERIES TO REMAIN ON LISTS LIKE THESE. *ROT*

***X-MEN* #25 & *UNCANNY X-MEN* #309**
MARVEL COMICS
THE SEED OF ONSLAUGHT! WHILE THE MASSIVE NATURE OF

ONSLAUGHT MAY BE GONE FOR NOW, THE FATE OF CHARLES XAVIER IS STILL VERY MUCH UP IN THE AIR, IT ALL BEGAN HERE. *ROT*

SUPERMAN #16
DC COMICS
THE ALIEN MATRIX THAT IS NOW SUPERGIRL FIRST APPEARED IN THIS ISSUE. IT SEEMS THAT THE FANS ARE ENJOYING THE NEW SUPERGIRL, BUT REALLY DON'T CARE WHO/WHAT SHE IS UNLESS PETER DAVID AND GARY FRANK HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH IT. *SVC*

TALES OF THE TEEN TITANS #44
DC COMICS
ROBIN DITCHES HIS OLD THREADS FOR HIS NEW NIGHTWING LOOK! IT WAS A SLOW MONTH AND WE WERE TAPPED FOR IDEAS...CUT US SOME SLACK! *WOB*



THE INCREDIBLE HULK #403
MARVEL COMICS
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME READERS REALLY SAW GARY FRANK, AND THEY'RE STILL SEEING HIM WITH HIS WONDERFUL MONTHLY WORK ON *SUPERGIRL*. *SVC*

STARMAN #10
DC COMICS
THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE NEW STARMAN'S ARCH-ENEMY...THE NEW AND IMPROVED MIST. YA GOTTA GIVE THIS ONE A LITTLE MORE TIME! *SVC*

ALL THINGS *MARS ATTACKS*
TOPPS COMICS
JUST WAITIN' FOR THE MOVIE...
SVC

FAN 15

1

PREACHER #1
DC COMICS/VERTIGO
In more demand than a cup of coffee at an AA meeting!

2

WITCHBLADE #1
IMAGE COMICS/TOP COW PRODUCTIONS
In more demand than a cold beer at a baseball game!

3

GEN13 #1 (VARIANTS)
IMAGE COMICS/WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS
In more demand than a picture of Madonna's baby!

11

WOLVERINE #100
MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT
In more demand than a bottle of Champagne on New Years Eve!

10

ABSOLUTE VERTIGO
DC COMICS/VERTIGO
In more demand than Spock ears at a Star Trek Convention!

9

LADY DEATH THE ODYSSEY #1
CHAOS! COMICS
In more demand than a case of hairspray at the Miss America pageant!!x

8

DAWN #1
SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT
In more demand than a pocket protector in Radio Shack!

7

PREACHER #2
DC COMICS/VERTIGO
In more demand than a smoke at an AA meeting.

GEN13 #1 (MINI-SERIES)
IMAGE COMICS/WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS
In more demand than an orange day-glo vest at an NRA meeting!

4

GEN13 #2 (MINI-SERIES)
IMAGE COMICS/WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS
In more demand than a bottle of aspirin at the FAN offices!

5

6

WITCHBLADE #2
IMAGE COMICS/TOP COW PRODUCTIONS
In more demand than a cab in New York!

15

DARKCHYLDE #1
MAXIMUM PRESS
In more demand than an attractive woman dressed as Yeoman Rand!

14

STRAY BULLETS #1
EL CAPITAN
In more demand than a pack of rolling papers at a Phish concert!

13

HITMAN #1
DC COMICS
In more demand than bomb-making material in Northern Ireland!

12

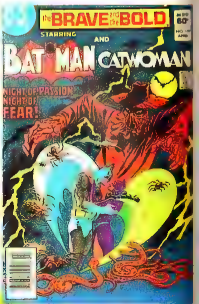
POISON ELVES #1
SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT
In more demand than a piercing gun at Lollapalooza!

year end flash

THE BRAVE & THE BOLD

Issue No. 149
Cover Date: April, 1979
Writer: Bob Haney
Artist: Jim Aparo
Current Guide Price: $3.50

It's Batman and those crazy super-powered kids who are trying to make this world a better place!! Not Gen [13] Not X-Force! They were the original Teen Titans, and with the Caped Crusader by their side, they kicked butt!! In this epic story, some bad kids calling themselves The Runaways are committing crimes all over Gotham City, and it's up to the fabulous foursome to infiltrate their gang and stop the madness (kinda like *21 Jump Street*). This book's got it all. Bad Attitudes! Cool Costumes! Wacky '70s dialogue! What else could you want?!!



Issue No. 197
Cover Date: April, 1983
Writers: Alan Brennert
Artists: Joe Staton & George Freeman
Current Guide Price: $4.00

Ever since Frank Miller's **Dark Knight Returns** & **Batman: Year One**, fans have known that there was something special between the Catwoman and Batman. In this story, the Earth Two (remember Earth Two?) Batman and Catwoman act on those impulses, throw caution to the winds, and get themselves hitched. You'll be wiping away the tears....

DC COMICS PRESENTS

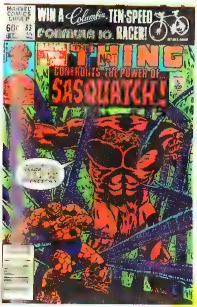
Issue No. 29
Cover Date: January, 1981
Writer: Len Wein
Artists: Jim Starlin
Current Guide Price: $2.00

Supergirl is missing and it's up to Superman to save her. Traveling at light speed, Superman bumps into the Spectre...literally. Fearful that Superman's rage and worry for his cousin will be the end of him, the Spectre plays the part of Sigmund Freud and psychoanalyzes the Man of Steel. Fun for all!

Issue No. 65
Cover Date: January, 1984
Writer: Paul Kupperburg
Artist: Gray Morrow
Current Guide Price: $2.00

Is somebody or something trying to possess Superman? Well, Supes think so, and that's why he's enlisted the aid of the alluring Madame Xanadu to help him out! (Note: Some of us at **FAN** can't wait until Vertigo gets their hands on this character, if you know what we mean....)

Back



MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE

Issue No. 83
Cover Date: January, 1982
Writer: Tom DeFalco
Artist: Ron Wilson
Current Guide Price: $2.00

Giant-Man is dying and only Walter Langkowski can save him! So that leaves Ben Grimm, also known as the Thing, to travel to Canada to find the good doctor. The only problem is that Langkowski is also Sasquatch, the Man-Beast, and is looking for a fight...with anyone! This is Marvel mayhem at its best, kids! Buy it!

Issue No. 86
Cover Date: April, 1982
Writer: Tom DeFalco
Artist: Ron Wilson
Current Guide Price: $1.00

In this explosive issue, the Thing and the Sandman drink beers together for several pages! There's also a dynamic scene where they band. Also, make sure you don't miss the two powerhouses as they reminisce uncontrollably. All sarcasm aside, this is a very cool issue that should not be missed. And besides, there's an Impossible Man back-up in it as well. A must read!

MARVEL TEAM-UP

Issue No. 123
Cover Date: November, 1982
Writer: J. M. DeMatteis
Artist: Kerry Gammill
Current Price Guide: $1.50

Before they were both the fun-loving guys they are today, Spider-Man and Daredevil dealt with such villains like Salarr, Spawn of the Sun! Thank god for Onslaught....

Issue No. 127
Cover Date: March, 1983
Writer: J. M. DeMatteis
Artist: Kerry Gammill
Current Guide Price: $1.50

It's Christmas magic Marvel style! The Watcher gives Spidey a jewel that shows a beautiful woman's dying face. Given the burden of trying to find the woman before its too late, Spidey goes to great lengths to make sure she, and he, has a Merry Christmas! It'll make you warm all over.

WHAT'S

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1996 was a roller coaster ride of a year for retailers, professionals, and fans in the comic book field. Distributor consolidations, publishers going out of business, and convention promoters folding right and left didn't make life easier for retailers and fans. As I pondered the events of 1996, I realized there were many temporal landmarks to guide me through the year, marking the seasons and the passage of time. We call them crossovers. Crossovers and big event marketing took center stage in 1996.

Our Crossover Calendar begins with the landmark **Marvel vs. DC** battlefest. This mini-series was the hottest thing going in a very cold and very snowy East coast winter.

Most of my customers were not satisfied with the way the classic face-offs were handled. It's not that they don't like a mindless slugfest, they just thought the battles were to short. Many actually felt cheated by the Wolverine/Lobo face-off. That battle was one of the major selling points. The whole "watching-the-bar-to-see-who-would-emerge-victorious-thing" was soooo lame.

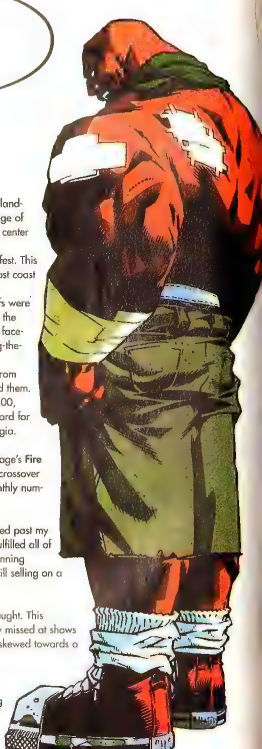
The **Marvel vs. DC** "event" was completely redeemed with the 12 titles from Amalgam Comics. Every one is a gem. If you haven't read them, go find them. With the exception of the **Legends of the Dark Claw**, which sells for $5.00, the rest are usually available at cover price. Amalgam also wins the award for most mispronounced word of the year, last year's winner being Malebolgia.

As the seasons changed, so did the events. Spring saw the launch of Image's **Fire From Heaven**. I thought it should be called **Heaven's Gate of Fire**. This crossover was so poorly received at my store that I only sold 1/3 of my usual monthly number of **Gen13** #11, which was the Fire .. x-over issue.

Easily the most eagerly awaited comic of the year, **Kingdom Come** soared past my expectations as a retailer and as a reader. Mark Waid and Alex Ross fulfilled all of the pressure DC and a lot of retailers had put on them by creating a stunning comic story that sold like hotcakes on Sunday. And six months later is still selling on a regular basis.

Another consistent seller this summer was the Marvel event called Onslaught. This crossover sold well, and I still have people asking for various issues they missed at shows all across the country. I have noticed that, demographically, Onslaught skewed towards a much younger audience than usual.

Autumn brought us Heroes Reborn. What can be said about Heroes Reborn that hasn't been hashed over already? It's kind of like GM hiring



Chrysler to design cars for them, because GM doesn't know how to make cars people want.

DC's **Final Night**, which sold well, and **Batman: The Long Halloween** round out the Fall and point us toward the new year.

What can we take into 1997 that we have learned from the crossovers of '96? The continued need for major events to attract the attention of consumers and retailers underscores the vulnerability of the big comic publishers in the era of the diverse comic shop.

Competition from the variety of product lines within the store itself—toys, cards, T-shirts, hats, statues and other licensed products—are causing comic publishers to resort to using marketing techniques (that's what crossovers are) they used to do annually, three and four times a year. The end result of all of this is a year-round inter-company event that never ends. You never know, The **Final Zero Crisis Onslaught Inferno Agenda** might be a really good story.

VARIANT MADNESS '96

Variants came in many ways in 1996: randomly packed, event specials, and custom jobs. I make as much money off books like this as I do anything I sell, Silver and Golden Age, toys & premiums. As I said last year, make sure you want a book like this for your collection because the only guy who is going to make money off comics like this is the guy you bought it from. Of course that's me, and it's guys like me who make a market in this sort of collectible.

INDEPENDENT/SMALL PRESS REPORT

There is as much activity in the independent market as there was ten years ago. There are some key differences though. In '86, everyone was speculating on the black and white small press, causing the market to be saturated with a lot of product that was, in reality, garbage. In '96 there are more good small press comics than ever, but retailers don't have the money to chase everything until it has proven demand. So that leaves you with books like: **Akiko**, **Another Day**, **Cavewoman**, **Cyberfrog**, **Dreamwalker**, **Kiss & Tell**, **Stray Bullets**, **Snowman**, **Rib**, **Tales From The Bag**, and **Arcana** having very low, early print runs, 3,000 or less. This causes the prices to increase rapidly when the general readership in comic-land finds out how good they are. Supply and demand are the reason the value of any collectible increases. You never know when demand will start or end. If no one wanted an **Amazing Fantasy** #15, all the copies of that comic would be worthless.

AWARD TIME

It wouldn't be a year in review without the Cleary Awards for Comic Achievement. Here are the winners for 1996:

Best New Comic Series- **Akiko** by Mark Crilley

Best Selling Writer- Garth Ennis for **Preacher**, **Medieval Spawn/Witchblade**, and now **Shadowman**.

Best Selling Artist-Jim Lee (even if it's mostly covers nowadays)

Best Selling Cover- **Gen13** #11 European Holochrome cover

Best Mini-series- **Kingdom Come** by Mark Waid and Alex Ross

Best Single Comic- **Super Soldier** #1

Best Crossover- Amalgam

The Comeback Award-**Supergirl**—the success of the Girl of Steel proves you can't keep a good trademark down.

The Make Up Your Mind Award- Goes to Robb Horan, the publisher of Sirius Comics. He's not quite sure if he wants to be a Publisher or a Retailer, so he's doing both and that's why I don't carry **Dawn** variants or Special Editions anymore.

The Fair is Fair Award-To Marvel Comics for driving the price of their stock so low that it matched the average price of their comics. Which should you spend your $2.00 on? At least some of their comics have a shot at going up in value.

The Best **FAN** Market Report-goes to Shawn Spurlock of Graham Crackers Comics. Make your plans now to go to the Chicago Comicon this year and meet Shawn. It's worth the trip.

Best Price Guide-You're reading it now.

End of year thanks go to all the hard-working editors at **FAN**; there's more of them than there are pages in the magazine—check out the masthead sometime. Best wishes for 1997 to everyone in Comicdom from all of us here at Quantum.

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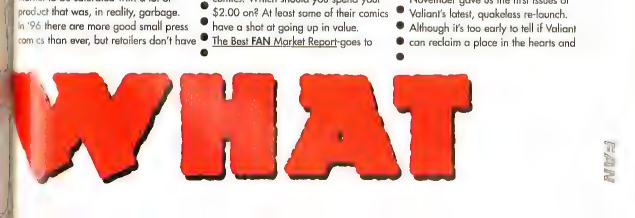
Hey, kids! It's time once again for that annual festival of reminiscence that we like to call the year-end market report. Unfortunately, this is actually being written in mid-November, so we won't be addressing anything taking place in December, which is just as well because this year already seems longer than an unwanted tapeworm. However, that still leaves us with eleven months that were packed fuller than the diuretic-laden bladder of a kindly octogenarian. So join us, won't you, as we take a constitutional down memory lane, occasionally pausing to enjoy the random humorous nuance, the uplifting spirit of an entire industry in transition, and the lapses as we stand in a catatonic state, desperately attempting to recapture those precious memories that singlemalt scotch has stolen from us.

ACCLAIM COMICS

November gave us the first issues of Valiant's latest, quakeless re-launch. Although it's too early to tell if Valiant can reclaim a place in the hearts and



wallets of comic readers, it's not too early to guess that **X-O** and **Shadowman** are the two titles most likely to survive. Perhaps the recent wave of terrorist ninjakings will help promote sales on what looks to be the weakest title of the three released thus far.

ANTARCTIC PRESS

The company that launched **Strangers in Paradise** and provided safe haven for **Hepcats** is producing (hopefully on time for X-mas) the most amusing, molded plastic item of the year: the Warrior Nun action figure with ruler-smashing knuckle action. There's nothing like an action figure of the cloth for religious holiday giftgiving.

BIG E

At this juncture, sales are so poor that they're probably wishing that their initial public offering had involved vestal virgins and ornate, serrated knives.

BONGO COMICS

I will not keep underestimating demand for **Simpson** comics, nor will I tie the cat to the Tonka truck and raft it downhill. I will not keep underestimating demand for **Simpsons** comics, nor will I...

CHAOS! COMICS

It's a comic, it's a solar collection panel. Relax! It's both. **Lady Death: The Odyssey** proved that the character has definitely survived the demise of last year's bad girl frenzy that seemed as infectious as a social disease in Brazil. The character has, in fact, blossomed into a cottage industry whose products include, but aren't limited to, textiles, leather goods, and wet bar supplies. Perhaps the fine folks at Chaos! will even produce the oft-spoken of Chastity belt.

Purgatori was also a great seller, prompting many young, aspiring comic artists to run out and buy themselves a compass for that spherical-tastic look.

DARK HORSE COMICS

This company continues to produce some of the highest quality books out there. Unfortunately, many of their largest-selling, most well-received titles are miniseries, a fact that makes a yearly DH sales report look surprisingly like a seismograph reading.

The Legend titles—**Sin City**, **Concrete**, **Hellboy**, **Madman**, and **Monkeyman and O'Brien**—all solid bigger numbers than their last series. One can only wonder what would happen if any or all of these titles were to go monthly.

Barry Windsor Smith Storyteller was a much larger success than we had anticipated. Although the coloring is reminiscent of Peter Max, the book is really good and well worth the price of admission.

Another Dark Horse book worthy of mention, let alone praise, is **Harlan Ellison's Dream Corridor Quarterly**. You don't have to be familiar with Harlan's work to enjoy this title. Of course, if you are an Ellison reader, the framing sequences will make you feel like Harlan himself is right there in the room with you, without having to endure the uncomfortable feeling that you're always saying something stupid. He's only a drawing, you see, and therefore cannot demolish what little self-worth you may possess with witty insightful banter. The perfect book for the average, poorly socialized, comic fan.

Star Wars used to make me think of Darth Vader, Imperial Walkers, and Carrie Fisher in a metal bikini. Now, I only think of a naked Mike Richardson rolling around on really big-ass piles of money

DC COMICS

Regardless of the fact that Sergio Aragones destroyed it, DC had a spectacular year. Waid and Rass' **Kingdom Come**, widely recognized as the best spandex-related project of the year, managed to revitalize a few of DC's dustier icons without instilling that nagging sense of desperation that permeated sore, other rebirth-related projects. In fact, the mini-series was so successful that DC has announced a **Kingdom Come** ongoing series, written by Waid with Alex Ross covers. It should be interesting to see how well the title will do without the nifty, Where's Waldo quality that the Ross art brought to the mini-series.

Another book that seems to be exciting readers is **JLA**. The first issue was an outstanding success, and it appears that Grant Morrison is going to be able to turn this book into one of DC's best sellers.

In fact, virtually every one of this company's main-line titles saw substantial increases throughout the year. Renewed reader interest spurred sales of **Aquaman**, **Flash**, both of the excellent **Legion** titles, **Green Arrow**, and **Green Lantern** (no doubt helped by the four-part house-ad that was **Final Night**). The five ongoing

Batman titles all sell differently, but it's the Kelly Jones Batman that's definitely the most popular. However its sales never seem to surpass special projects such as this year's **Black and White**, **Batman/Grendel II**, and **The Long Halloween**. Perhaps the editorial decision to eliminate multi-title crossover stories will boost sales of the regular titles in '97.

Supergirl was such a breakaway success that it makes the sales of the regular **Superman** titles look practically anemic. In fact, the first issue was selling for $7 before the third issue shipped. This unexpected success was even almost enough to forget the **Superman Wedding Album** debacle. The Vertigo line lost its cornerstone title with the publication of **Sandman #75**, but it seems as though **Preacher, Books of Magic,** and **Sandman Mystery Theatre** (thanks to its recent crossover with **Starman**—the best monthly title on the racks) will meet the challenge of filling that particular vacuum.

And there was **Gon**.

DC/MARVEL

Perhaps you remember the two goofy-looking transformers who caused the crossover event of the summer? No? Maybe you'll remember the five-panel "fights" that were promoted for four months? No? Didn't it all come flooding back when you read the first scintillating issue of **DC/Marvel: All Access**? You didn't buy it you say? That's okay, nobody else did either.

Although **Marvel vs. DC** sold well, as did the accompanying Amalgam books, there does seem to be an unfortunate side effect. The Pandora's Box that stores the crossover evils is now being opened and closed more often than a 40 oz. bottle of malt liquor at a high school bash. Perhaps it may be time to embrace those good ol' isolationist policies of the 30s...before we're subjected to something like **Superman in Sin City**. Well, actually...

EVENT

I seem to recall an issue of **Ash**, but it could just be the scotch talking.

FANTAGRAPHICS

Love & Rockets ended its run with issue #50, only to be replaced by more frequent work by Los Bros. in the form of **New Love** and **Whoa Nellie!**

The brilliant Jim Woodring's most recognizable—in its own special way—creation finally received its own ongoing series, **Frank**, as Eros Comics continued to provide evidence that there is really quite a bit of lingering radiation and that we should continue to apologize profusely to all of the citizens of Japan.

IMAGE COMICS

Hardly a week goes by when some former "investor" doesn't darken my door, gesticulating-wildly while offering me complete runs of "early" Image books. I must admit that there is some small part of me that finds amusement in the act of explaining to some dullard that his twenty copies of **Bloodstrike #1** shall earn him no recompense.

Of course, that's not said to imply that there's no market for back issues of Image titles that still exist. In fact, the market for back issues of **Spawn, Maxx, Savage Dragon,** and **WildC.A.T.s** (Fire from Heaven parts excluded) is fairly strong.

Image managed to introduce a few new titles that appear destined for long-term success, such as **Curse of Spawn** and **Witchblade**, as well as embracing the Homage imprint, home of three of the finest monthly books available today. **Astra City, Leave It To Chance,** and **Strangers in Paradise** may finally succeed in lending Image the "artistic" facet that the company sorely needs in order to increase its audience.

Spawn, the publisher's best selling title, received a new head which appeared on an exclusive-to-the-direct-market action figure that's currently selling for $100-150.

Witchblade, the second-best-selling Image title, managed to generate a spin-off title, **Tales of the Witchblade**, before it even reached its tenth issue.

LIGHTNING COMICS

How about a big hand for the folks who started the incredibly loathsome nude cover thing, and, hey, while we're at it, let's all wish really hard that they'll someday be dragged by their netherparts through broken glass.

MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT

The House of Ideas certainly turned a few things around during the course of the year. For the first time in recent memory, Marvel actually deserved their position as one of the best-selling publishers in the industry. It was pleasant to see people actually enthused about buying Marvel titles, as opposed to just being victims of inertia.

It was definitely the year of Onslaught, the intra-company crossover that, along with DC's **Kingdom Come**, was directly responsible for the moderate turnaround that the entire industry is currently experiencing.

The company then followed Onslaught with Heroes Reborn, which has admittedly been receiving mixed reviews but (for three titles of the four) is selling more copies now than before the big change. Perhaps Jim Lee's return has shown Marvel, once and for all, that the people producing the book are indeed as important as the characters that they're working with.

Of course, this is best illustrated by the current creative teams working on both **Daredevil** and **Silver Surfer**. Typically perennial also-rans, these books are the best work that Marvel's currently offering.

SIRIUS

This company added a few new titles to

its roster this year, but none of them, with the possible exception of **Fang: Testament**, has the following of either **Dawn** or **Poison Elves**. **Dawn**, the title that's only slightly less strung-out than Robert Downey Jr., certainly hasn't suffered any lost sales due to its infrequency. By the same token, **Poison Elves** didn't lose any readers due to the fact that Drew appreciated the latest Butthole Surfers disc

TOPPS

The braintrust at Topps seems to have adopted a radical new strategy First, you undermine sales of your best selling title by making sure that it ships on a schedule that can only be predetermined by reading some fresh, steaming goat entrails. Then, stop publishing the title that would tie into what looks to be the Christmas season's biggest movie.

Well, there you have it, there it is, the parts that spring to mind. I was going to recommend a few independent titles that started up this year, but the barkeep is becoming quite adamant about my not having to go home but not staying here. Strangely enough, he seemed like a much nicer guy a couple of hours ago when I asked him how to spell diuretic.

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This month my report will be in two stages. The regular monthly report will be the first stage, but it will be a little short, since **FAN** asked me to do an overall review of the past year. That's the second stage. In the meantime...

ACCLAIM COMICS

Most of the first issues of the second volumes of Acclaim's superhero line have shipped. Let's look at the sales. I ordered a total of 50 copies of **X-O Manowar** Vol. 2 #1. With that order, Lee's received 20 variant covers. As of three weeks of sales, we have sold 50% of the regular cover and 95% of the variant. The funny thing is that when I ordered the first volume of **X-O** #1, the total order for Lee's was the same amount! Minus the variants. The first month sales matched the above, too. Anyway, I read the new **X-O Manowar** and liked it but did not find it as intriguing as the first volume.

Ninjak Vol. 2 #1 was the next title to ship. I ordered the same amount of copies as **X-O** but found it created much less enthusiasm on shipment day. Sales in the first week were 20 out of 50, with no one interested in the variants (Okay, six copies sold)

The Grackle and **Gravediggers** titles are selling out at 10 copies each.

CALIBER COMICS

Kaos Moon by David Boller looked good to me when I was thinking

all) ordering it. So, instead of ordering only 6 copies I decided to up it to 10 and see what would happen. The first issue sold out in two weeks' time. The cover art and coloring are exceptional. The inside art is black and white—very clean and detailed while being easy to follow with your eyes. Worth a look!

DARK HORSE COMICS

Body Bags is a cult hit! I mentioned this comic last month, but the response in our area has been overwhelming. I made a series of reorders for #1 at 6 copies apiece and sold out of them three different times, always within a week of receiving the order! Unfortunately, I have been unable to fill any reorders on issue #2.

Dark Horse has continued to be one of the leading publishers of Japanese translated comics The latest two comics worth mentioning are **Chronowar** and **Tales of the Immortals**. Both of these books have continued to sell around 95 copies each (with reorders). Manga fans should look for these surprise hits!

The last comic I want to report on is a "sleeper" title. **Edgar Rice Burroughs' Tarzan** line is a must-read for fans of pulp characters. The stories are extremely involved. Any fan of Tarzan will devour this series. The sales are a little slow. I now order 15 and sell 10 in the first two weeks.

DC COMICS

The new marketing idea from DC is a series of comics priced at $2.95 with the addition of the word "Plus" to the title. These titles have one obvious connection. They team up two super-heroes under the heading of one particular (and usually more popular) character to highlight the importance of the meeting between the two. The first Plus title to ship was **Azrael Plus #** 1. Sales were exactly the same as the regular **Azrael** title, around 30 copies. The same things happened with the next Plus title to ship, **Green Lantern Plus** #1. **Flash Plus** sold the best at 45 copies, with Nightwing as the guest character. I appreciate DC's efforts to modify the old team-up idea but I think half of these titles are unnecessary. For example, DC has solicited a **Superman Plus** title and a **Batman Plus** title. Both of these characters have five different titles being published on a regular basis. Enough already!

DC has almost been pulling a "Marvel" in regards to high priced comics. A "Marvel" is pushing an idea until it can not possibly make more money. The reason I say "almost" in reference to DC is because DC's high priced books are more consistent in sales as compared to their competition, and generally of higher quality. The most impressive example is the **Farewell Moonshadow** graphic novel priced at $7.95. This is a continuation of the original **Moonshadow** series published by Epic comics in 1985. (This series has recently been republished under the Vertigo imprint and also ran 12 issues with an expanded ending for the fans.) Jon J. Muth's watercolor paintings are masterful and the J.M. DeMatteis scripting is extremely competent. I ordered 30 copies and sold out in the first two weeks. That's like selling out of over 150 comics at $1.50 or 100 copies at $2.50! A lesser example of a high priced comic DC published is the **Superboy/Robin: World's Finest 3** priced at $4.95. I liked reading this comic, but felt that this could easily have been produced in a $2.95 format and been just as viable. Sales were 25 copies out of 50 after three weeks of sales. My point is that consumers have shown support for the high-priced comics but do not want to see a five dollar comic book become a common event!

JLA #1 was a big success! 100 copies sold out in the first week. I think that the previous **Justice League** mini-series helped bring this great team of heroes back into public attention. Also, we fans really like having the heavy-hitters together again! Not a loose-knit sack of second rate heroes who hardly know the meaning of the word. (Okay: maybe the new Green Lantern, Kyle Rayner doesn't quite fit in, but at least he has the Ring!) The Honeymoon storyline that ran following the **Superman Wedding Album** appeared in the next three regular Superman titles. Based on the sales of the comics following the **Death of Superman**, Lee and I agreed on a total of 200 copies for each of the Honeymoon issues as compared to 400 total for the titles following the **Death**. Unfortunately, sales only increased by about 5%. Lee's usually sells around 45-50 copies of any given issue of Superman and sold hardly over 60 copies for each chapter of the Honeymoon. The whole promotion for this event had very poor support.

One title I noticed I have failed to report on is the new **Nightwing** ongoing series. This book started with the first issue selling over 90 copies (with reorders) and continuing to sell at 50 plus copies for issues two and three.

Preacher has been maintaining steady sales at 50 copies a month. **Wonder Woman** has slowed down a bit to 40 copies a month, but **New Gods** is up to 35 copies a month as compared to 10 before John Byrne took over. And finally, the latest **Big Book** from Paradox Press, **The Big Book of Thugs**, sold out of 16 copies within a month.

FANTAGRAPHICS

This publisher continues to produce high quality comics. The latest instance is **Coventry** by Bill Willingham. Very clean art with solid inking. It had so much eye appeal that my fiancee actually wanted to read it! The only other comic that claims this honor is **Bone** by Jeff Smith. Highly recommended!

HOMAGE COMICS

Kurt Busiek's Astro City Vol. 2 is a continued success! I ordered 110 copies of the first issue and sold 90 in 50 days. The second issue sold a little faster at 70 copies out of 90 within a month. If you still have not tried this title, then you are really missing out on some fresh storytelling.

Leave it to Chance has sold quite a bit slower than **Astro City**, but boasts the same quality. I also ordered 110 copies of the first issue of **Chance** but sold only half in the same period of time. I think that this story will sell better when it is republished in a collected format. I have often thought that most stories would sell better collected in graphic novel form initially, rather than the accepted format of a periodical. I think a good example is the **Wizard's Tale** graphic novel soon to be shipping from Homage. It looks very promising.

IMAGE COMICS

DV8 #2 sold quite a bit slower than the previous issue. I ordered 75 copies and sold half the first week. Ramos' art looks good to me, but obviously this book is not going to be as hot as **Gen13**.

Spawn the Impaler sold a little less than I would have liked, but I think that this comic will have a long shelf life. Out of 150 ordered, Lee's sold 105 copies in three weeks. Nicely painted art on the inside! A must for Spawn fans!

MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT

The **Star Trek/X-Men** special grew wings as soon as it hit the stands! I initially ordered 90 copies but quickly found out that was not nearly enough. To date I have received another 50 copies and they continue to sell briskly. This is at $5 each! Silvestri's art and interpretation of the Star Trek crew is one of the absolute best I have ever seen! Frankly, this book would have done just as well with the same art and no X-Men. Hey, you guys at Marvel, listen to me...publish a sequel. **Iron Man** #2 sold much better than I expected! 200 copies sold out in two weeks! This book has more room to grow story-wise than any of the other Heroes Reborn titles. This will result in bigger sales since fans will not be as likely to drift away after 5 or 6 issues. I really recommend you try this book!!

Silver Surfer #123 sold out the first week at 45 copies. This is due to Ron Garney's art, which started this issue. Also, this latest story brings the Surfer back to Earth, which is far more interesting than when the character is solely in space. Look for this new book now, before it becomes as hard to find as **Captain America** #444. **Venom: Tooth and Claw** sold out of 40 issues in the first two weeks. I think that it's obvious what sold this book: the fact that Wolverine will be appearing throughout the whole series. Sales have increased 30% over the most recent Venom miniseries. Is there any reason why Venom does not have a regular series? Sales sure seem to support this idea.

MAXIMUM PRESS

One title I feel compelled to mention is the latest issues of **Supreme**. Sales have gone up. I used to order 10 copies and would usually, but not always, sell out in a month. Presently, I am ordering 20 copies and selling out in two weeks! This is mainly due to Alan Moore taking over the scripting chores, but Joe Bennett's art looks very good. Consistent and clean. These early issues by these two creators probably have low print runs. So this might be a good time to look for back issues before they get too scarce.

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS

This company is the leader for Japanese translated comics. The latest sales example I have is the **Nausicaa Volume #7** TPB. This book sold out of 15 copies within seven days! Viz fills reorders very quickly, so I was able to receive 10 more copies. These sold out promptly within another six days. Viz continues to lead our graphic novel sales with both new and back list books. Look for this publisher and give them a try!

WARP GRAPHICS

I thought that with Warp reducing the amount of titles they published from eight to one, sales would have gone up over all. Unfortunately, that does not seem to be the case. The new series has sold steadily less with each subsequent issue. My current orders have now hit a low point of 35 copies total. This is a far cry from the 70 copies Lee's would sell not three years ago! While I eagerly await the *Elfquest* movie, I really hope that we can convince Wendy to pencil at least one complete issue. The fans would swarm if they heard of such an event! Nevertheless, this title is still one of the leaders of the Small Press genre.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE PAST YEAR

The beginning of the year seemed very positive. **DC vs. Marvel/Marvel vs. DC** was in full swing. Monthly sales were high, and at first, things did not appear so bleak. It seemed to us retailers as if the market had hit the dregs of the barrel and was beginning a slow and steady rise. So much so, that the mainstream media had more articles on and about comics than I have ever seen before—**USA Today** being the leader, at least on a nation-wide basis. **Kingdom Come** from DC really made a splash! This series made the previous blockbuster of the year, the aforementioned **DC vs. Marvel**, seem like a small event. The art and story set the standard for this year and many to come. Close on the heels of that colossal event came the massive Marvel Onslaught "non-crossover" storyline that brought customers in droves. This storyline established exactly who the traitor was: one of the most respected Marvel characters after Reed Richards, Tony Stark, and Aunt May...Professor Charles Xavier, Leader of the X-Men. This lead the way, for Marvel's Fall marketing plan...Heroes Reborn. But, we finally got rid of that pesky clone of Spider-Man!

Now, in case all that isn't enough to wet your whistle, we have seen more superior work from the Small Press arena than ever before! Titles such as **Acme Novelty Library**, **Bone**, and **Strangers in Paradise** have brought a diversification to our field that has been needed since 1989.

Plus the comic-related toy market has been booming! Never before have comic dealers had the exclusives we have presently been enjoying.

The only negative aspect of the year is that Capitol City Distribution was bought up by Diamond. The way the whole deal was handled was extremely professional, but it shows how much the market has shrunk and how much work we comics professionals still need to do to recover and grow in order to restore and surpass our former glory!

How did Lee's Comics do? Well, if you think I am going to give any hard numbers as I do with our comics numbers, then just forget it! To next year and beyond!!

FINAL COMMENTS

Whew! If that report doesn't contain enough information for you, then wait till next year! I plan to top myself. Until then, everyone at Lee's Comics wishes you a very happy holiday season!

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Is it really the end of 1996? Let's cast our memories back and see what huge events and great titles quickened our pulses and shortened our breathing, or stopped our pulses and made us gasp in dismay!

DARK HORSE COMICS

SIN CITY. Two words guaranteed to light up the face of many a customer! **That Yellow Bastard** caused many customers to haunt the store awaiting each installment. Miller is incredible. The *Star Wars* titles sold consistently, with **Shadows of the Empire** and the **Boba Fett** specials deserving honorable mention. The launch of the Blanc Noir line with **Body Bags** was a powerful start. It will be interesting to see where this line ends up. Watch for

In '97, **Barry Windsor Smith's Storyteller** was received well with customers really only wondering how to pack the oversize comic! **Monkeyman and O'Brien** finally made an appearance and was received well. Overall, the Dark Horse line seems to be expanding and with such a diversity, we feel things can only get better. One recommendation—we want more **SIN CITY**!!!

DC COMICS

DC vs. **Marvel** was hugely popular and many DC fans (and let's admit it—some Marvel fans in h ding) disagreed with the outcome. The subsequent **Amalgam** titles did reasonably well. "Catch the Contagion!" Contagion-related titles proved to be a very strong sellers, more popular than the Legacy storyline. The launch of the Helix titles was a huge and interesting step by DC. **Black Lamb** is so far the most in demand, and we think demand will increase as the Helix line expands. **JLA's Midsummer's Nightmare** proved to be a retailer's nightmare as customer demand skyrocketed!! **JLA** has fans of all types and devotions picking it up The **Preacher** Factor exponentially increased with the release of the **Saint of Killers** and Arseface specials. In the store, customers are quoting the Arseface special in daily conversation (David and Shane), but let's not repeat the words! Ennis has the Midas touch, as not only **Preacher** sold well but **Hitman** "proved to be a hit" (Gary). The Vertigo line has steadily grown in following, ranging from the **Essential** reprinting of the mammoth 7-year **Sandman** run, to the Verite titles. A big disappointment was the **Death: The Time of Your Life** mini. Other major events include: **Final Night**, which culminated in the best kept secret death of a character, Superman's Wedding to Lois, and the incredible 10th Anniversary of **The Dark Knight Returns.** Highlight of the year across the board is definitely **Kingdom Come**—the story and art for surpassing most anything on shelves this year. Overall we believe DC had a fantastic year in terms of creative new lines and major events. Bring on a DC '97!

IMAGE COMICS

All **Spawn** titles sold well. **Gen13** has been doing good too, and **DV8** kicked off to a popular start due to the multiple cover renditions. **Witchblade** was definitely the hottest new title out of the Image stable and has maintained sales at a high level. I think it's Nottingham and his sword, as well as the Witchblade's ability to remove Sara's clothing when activating, that are the major drawcards. Many fans have looked on in awe (and several in confusion) at the progress of the **Savage Dragon**, ranging from the birth to the God vs. Devil issues. The demise of Deathblow was a huge surprise as the character was well liked. Fans of Deathblow agreed that the unexpected and unannounced death was realistic and well-handled. The Homage line is generating great interest with **Leave it to Chance** selling out on issues available so far! We are all awaiting **The Darkness**. See Ennis comments in the DC section, and couple that with the awesome talents of Mr. Silvestri and there you have it...gold.

MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT

Again, let's mention **Marvel vs. DC** as a huge seller that had fans yelling and re-enacting fight scenes in the store! The best selling Amalgam title was clearly **Legends of the Dark Claw.** It was a huge year for X-fans and Spidey-fans alike. On the X-front, the X-traitor was shockingly revealed as none other than the beloved mentor. We had odds on Gambit, Dark Beast and Magneto, but not many picked it as the Bald One. Onslaught ripped through the Marvel universe and soles reflected that. Wolverine's feral state (and lack of nose) as a result of the whole adamantium loss has been cause for heated debate among customers **Wolverine** #100 shocked the hell outta many people. However, three cheers for the re-intro of Elektra. It's a good idea—let's see how she fares in '97. Many fans would have loved to have seen Frank Miller do the **Elektra** title, but picked it up regardless. Sin City/Elektra!?!? Most definitely the major Spidey event was the Revelations storyline re-establishing Spidey as he should have always remained. The other major events were the Heroes Reborn titles which garnered huge interest, especially for the Jim Lee titles, and the re-launch of the *Star Trek* titles. Fans are eagerly awaiting Devil's Reign and **Code of Honor**. Overall, with Marvel's downsizing of titles, the year has been rather small in terms of titles and events.

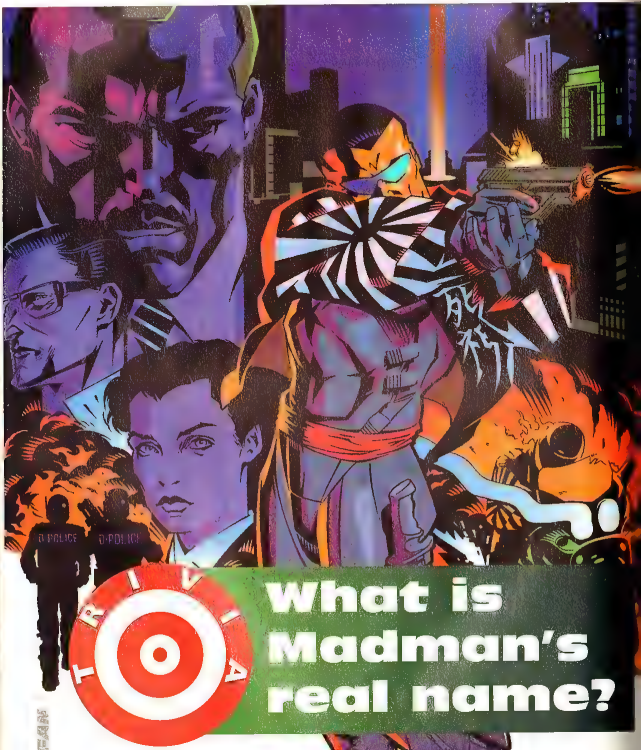
HONORABLE MENTIONS

Acclaim re-launching the Valiant titles has been a surprise hit so far. **X-O Manowar** is definitely the big title so far. **Johnny the Homicidal Maniac** also developed a cult following here. Crusade's Shi character went manga had a Halloween issue, and disappeared tragically into the mists. The launch of various **Crow** mini-series was a major event at Kitchen Sink and for MANY fans. The historic first color **Crow** comic, **Crow: City of Angels**, sold steadily.

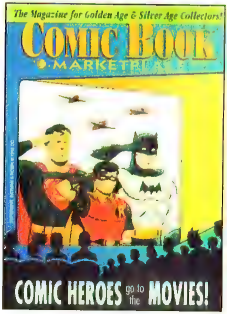
TOP 1996 COMIC EVENTS

5. Relaunch of Acclaim
4. Spidey "Revelations" storyline
3. Superman's Wedding
2. Onslaught/Heroes Reborn
1. **KINGDOM COME!!!**

Looking back, the year was pretty hot! We look forward to 1997 and hope to be here, same Bat-time, same Bat-magazine, reminiscing about the good, the better, and the best in comics!

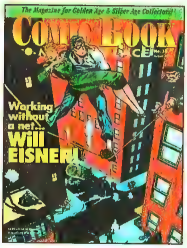


COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE



Comic Book Marketplace #43
On Sale Mid-December
As the interest in Golden Age and Silver Age Comic Character collectibles continues to soar, more and more collectors are turning their interest toward vintage comic character movie collectibles! CBM #43 goes inside the largest known collection of these items and looks at dozens of rare and valuable one-of-a-kind items. Plus much more!

And don't miss out on our back issues! They're going fast... CBM #23, 25, 28, 34, 39, & 40 are sold out!



To subscribe to or order back issues (Visa or MasterCard) call (619) 437-1996 -- 9 AM to 5 PM Pacific Time. Please mention Overstreet's FAN #20 when calling.

HIGH END MA

by Joe Mannarino

Christie's Comic Collectibles Sale A Hit!

Christie's held it's sixth Comic Collectibles Sale on November 1 at its New York showroom. The sale was a huge success as all segments of the market scored with big hits. Christie's policy of limiting the number of lots was subscribed as the focus on individual items was intense. The result was superior prices giving a truer assessment of the market.

Highlights:

Golden Age book: **Action #1** in Fine (68) condition with moderate restoration $63,000.

Silver Age book: **Flash #105** estimated at $2,500-$3,500 in Near Mint (93) — $9,775.

Golden Age art: Schomburg recreation **Captain America** #28 est. $3,000-5000— $11,500.

Silver Age art: Jack Kirby splash page est. $6,000-8,000; **Fantastic Four** #51—$14,950.

Comic strip art: Winsor McCay, Little Nemo 1910—$21,850.

Disney: Floyd Gottfredson's painting "Mickey Mouse in the Race for Riches" — $29,900.

Fantasy/Sci-Fi: Frazetta **Arcanum** book, pencil illustration—$11,800.

Premiums: Gold Collection Three Stooges promotion est. $3,000-4,000— $13,225.

Prices Realized:

Golden Age Comics: Action #1 restored Fine (68) realized $63,000; Mile High **All Star#1** Near Mint (94) $34,500; **Action Comics #7** restored Fine+(70) estimated at $2000-2500 brought $4,830; **Superboy #1** restored Fine+(69) $1,700; **Detective Comics** #58,60,61 and 62 overall Fine+(61) estimated $2,000-2,500 sold for $3,450; **The Submariner #1** Very Good (44) $3,220; **Green Lantern #1** Very Good (45) $4,025; **Batman** #33,73 and **Sneak Lantern** #10 estimated at $1,000-1,500 brought $2,070; **Superman** #53-58,65,66 and 76 offered with **Superboy #10,17** and 20 overall Fine+(69) $3,450; and **Batman** #3,4,5 and 6 overall Good- $1,840.

Silver Age Comics: The Big Apple Collection proved to be a winner with the following prices realized: **Showcase #19** Near Mint (94) estimated at $1,500-2,000 realized $4,370; **Flash #105** Near Mint (93) estimated at $2,500-3,500 sold for a whopping $9,775; **Showcase #1** Very Fine (82) estimated at $2,000-2,500 sold for $5,750; **Amazing Fantasy #15** Fine+ (70) $5,750; **Showcase #9** Very Fine+ (85) $4,025; **The Incredible Hulk #1,2,3**, and 5 overall Very Fine- (76) $6,900; **Tales of Suspense #1** and 2 Very Fine (77) estimated at $800-1,200 brought $1,955; **Showcase #23, 29, 38** and 39 overall Very Fine (77) $1,150. Other prices realized include **Fantastic Four #2-10** overall Fine- (60) $4,370; Bethlehem copy of **Strange Tales #1** Fine+ (73) $2,530; the Bethlehem copy of **Showcase #10** Near Mint (91) $6,900; **Adventure Comics #103** Near Mint (94) $5,750; **Amazing Spider-Man #9, 10, 13** and 14 estimated at $2,500-5,000 sold for $4,025; 30 issues of **Amazing Spider-Man** beginning with #15 overall Very Fine (82) $5,060; **Showcase #4** Very Good (52) $3,450. The **Avengers #1** Near Mint (90) $2,990; **Amazing Spider-Man #1** restored Fine +(70) $2,530; and **Amazing Fantasy #15** restored Fine+ (70) $2,300.

Golden Age Art: Some highlights from the newly discovered Kozlak collection included the Kubert splash page from **Flash Comics #72** realized $4,025; Jack Burnley page from **All Star #9** sold for $4,025; Splash from **All American Comics #55** brought $2,530; Alex Schomburg recreation from **Captain America #28** estimated at $3,000-5,000 received $11,500.

Silver Age Art: Jack Kirby's splash page to **Fantastic Four #51**, inked by Joe Sinnott, estimated at $6,000-8,000 realized $14,950; Steve Ditko - splash page from **Amazing Spider-Man #8** realized $12,650; pages **#4, 5, 11** and 12 also from **Amazing Spider-Man #8** sold for $6,325; eight other pages sold for $10,810; page #20 from **Amazing Spider-Man #21** sold for $3,680. Cover recreations rendered by the original Silver Age artists outperformed all expectations. Jim Steranko's recreation of **Nick Fury Agent Of Shield #6** cover estimated at $4,000-6,000 realized $10,350. Dick Ayers' recreation with coloring by the original colorist, Stan Goldberg, of **Fantastic Four #3** estimated at $1,000-1,500 brought $2,990. Joe Sinnott's recreation with coloring by Marie

RKET REPORT

Severin, estimated at $2,000-3,000 realized $3,960. Chic Stone's recreation of **Sgt. Fury and his Howling Commandos #13** estimated at $1,500-2,000 sold for $2,990. Gil Kane's recreation of **Showcase #22** brought $3,220. Kirby's original art for the National Cartoonist Portfolio sold for $6,900; pages #14 and 17 from **Avengers #1** estimated at $800-1,200 realized $2,300; page #12 from **Fantastic Four #15** $1,725; page [illegible] from **Journey Into Mystery #112** estimated at $800-1,200 realized $1,725; Neal Adams cover **Detective #418** - $3,680; a specialty piece by Steranko realized $3,680; a Wally Wood splash from **Daredevil #1** realized $2,300.

Strip Art: A classic Winsor McCay, **Little Nemo in Slumberland** from 1910 in excellent condition, sold for $21,850; a second partial page dating back to 1906 brought $9,775. Two dreams of the **Rarebit Fiends** fetched $2,875 each and a third brought $3,220. An editorial cartoon realized $1,725. A specialty piece by Charles Schulz estimated at $700-900 sold for $1,265; a **Peanuts** Sunday from 1956 sold for $4,600 and another from 1978 sold for $5,175; a **Peanuts** daily from 1964 estimated at $1,000-1,500 brought $2,530. Also offered were two Hogarth Sundays both from 1944. One estimated at $2,500-3,000 went for $4,370, while the other estimated at $2,000-2,500 sold for $4,140. An Al Taliaferro **Silly Symphony Sunday** realized $5,175 while a Floyd Gottfredson **Mickey Mouse** daily from 1937 sold for $5,750. A **Krazy Kat** Sunday from 1943 estimated at $2,000-2,500 brought $5,520, while a daily from 1941 estimated at $1,200-1,500 sold for $2,415. Al Capp's **Li'l Abner** [illegible] popular! Examples from 1940 (8 dailies) estimated at $1,200-1,800 realized $2,070; examples from 1950 (10 dailies) sold for $1,840, and examples from 1944, 1945 and 1948 (9 dailies) sold for $2,530. A Frazetta **Johnny Comet** daily from the first year of the strip sold for $1,840.

Disney: Floyd Gottfredson's "Mickey Mouse in the Race for Riches," a 1980 commissioned piece, sold for $29,900. A Carl Barks pencil drawing depicting Uncle Scrooge in the money bin with his nephews sold for $2,875. A Barks cover rough for an **Uncle Scrooge** comic estimated at $1,000-1,800 sold for $2,530. A pencil on tissue depicting Uncle Scrooge fleeing from the Beagle Boys sold for $1,495. Another pencil on tissue depicting Donald, Daisy, Pluto and one of the nephews estimated at $700-900 sold for $2,990. A Bibo and Lang Mickey Mouse book sold for $2,185.

Fantasy and Sci-Fi Art: The first ever offering from Frank Frazetta's **Arcanum** book; pencil on paper sold for $11,500; a Frazetta depicting The Phantom brought $3,220. Boris Vallejo's painting "Tarzan The Untamed" from the 1978 Tarzan calendar sold for $3,220; Vallejo's "Tarzan and the Golden Lion" brought $3,750. J. Allen St. John's cover art for "Tarzan and the Lion Man" fetched $8,625. John R. Neill's original art for "The Patchwork Girl of Oz" estimated at $3,500-4,000 sold for $4,830.

Premiums: The Gordon K. Gold premium collection was a big success—here are some highlights. **Superman Pep** pin art offered with a Pep pin die cut display, sold for $5,175; **Hopalong Cassidy** trading cards promotion estimated at $2,000-3,000 realized $2,990; **Superman** full color display poster $4,025; two lots of **The Three Stooges Moving Picture Machine** promotion estimated at $3,000-4,000 realized $13,225 each; a **Funny Face National Premium** promotion estimated at $1,500-2,000 sold for $3,105; **Buck Rogers Space Ranger** promotion realized $3,220; a **Davy Crockett** patches promotion sold for $1,610.

Nadia and I would like to thank everyone who participated, both buyers, sellers and cheerleaders. Christie's was so pleased with the results that they have announced a sale for the spring of 1997. This means that the next scheduled major New York auction will be at Christie's. We are currently accepting consignments, so for more information call us at 201-652-1305. ■

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Hello, welcome to the FAN Price Guide! We work night and day to insure that the prices listed in the following pages are the most accurate and honest reflection of the comic book market. Enter freely, and of your own will.

ABOUT PRICING

The prices shown in the price guide section represent an honest and responsible evaluation of current market values. The prices represent an average of dealer retail prices compiled from data supplied by the network of FAN Advisors. Prices often vary widely from region to region because supply and demand factors often vary. Therefore, each buyer and seller should determine prices based on both prices listed here and regionally specific supply and demand factors. The prices, particularly on more expensive books, are a "moving average" of the market prices realized over the past month. Prices are constantly being recorded and averaged prior to the release of each issue. It is important for collectors to understand that since the Overstreet price is an average, it will never be the same as the highest or lowest most recent sale price. Collectors attempting to sell some or all of their acquisitions at a wholesale price to dealers should remember that dealers buy comics in order to resell them to other collectors. Dealers most always pay a higher percentage for issues which can be sold quickly and a much lower percentage for items in low demand. Dealers buy at a percentage that allows for their overhead, plus a fair margin of profit.

POLYBAGGED COMICS

It is the official policy of FAN to grade comics regardless of whether they are still sealed in their polybag or not. The polybag and it's entire contents may be preserved so that all components of the original product remain together.

GRADING DEFINITIONS

The hardest part of evaluating a comic is being objective, and knowing what characters to look for. The Overstreet Price Guide published in this magazine shows the Near Mint (NM) price only. For an expanded list and definition of grades, see the Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide. Very important: A book must be graded in its entirety, considering all defects. Do not grade the cover alone. A book in any of the grades listed must be in Original Unrestored Condition. Restored books must be described as such for an expanded definition.

NEAR MINT (NM)

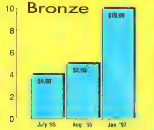
Nearly Perfect. Cover is flat with no surface wear. Cover inks are bright with high reflectivity and minimum of fading. Corners are cut square and sharp with ever so slight blunting permitted. Staples are generally centered, clean with no rust. Cover is well centered and firmly secured to interior pages. Paper is supple and like new. Spine is tight and flat.

BOOKS ON THE MOVE

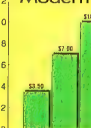
S.A. female superheroes are becoming hot. This title's performance shows that its no exception!

Superman #123 (Pre-Supergirl tryout)

DC 100 Page Super Spectacular #14



Breaking out recently, 100 page giants like this book are last treasures that show great potential.



What can we say? HOT WRITER (Garth Ennis) + HOT CHARACTER (Hitman) = SIZZLING HOT BOOK!!

The Demon Annual #2 (1st app. Hitman)

Contact us online at: PriceFAN @ aol.com

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494-Doomsday comes 3.00
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512 (2.50)-Main graphic foil cover 2.50
513 (2.50)-10/94) 518 (11/94) 1.50
4 5/42 524-begin 1.95-c 527-return of Hawkman from Zero Hour 2.50
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ion 5 (10/2, 2.50) Bloodlines Earthquake 2.75
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ion 7 (9/3, 2.95) Year One story 4.00
n 8 (9/6, 2.95) "Legends of the Dead ers" 3.00

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1996-Present (1995, color)
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1975 No. 11 Dec. 1976
1-Comics Group of the Apes-r in color 5.00
2-3 3.00
4-11 2.00

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Dec. 1993 (1.95 color, one shot)
Comico publication
1-Logged w/Card & mini-poster, Tribe Thy Word 3.00

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1993 (2.50, color, one-shot)
1-Comics Group
1-Signed-c/s 3.50

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1995 B&W,
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1-Limited Polybagged-w/ 3.00

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Dec. 1996 (2.50, color one shot)
1-Comics
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1985-Present (2.50/2.95 B&W)

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2-2nd printings 4.00
2-5 8.00
6-16 6.00
17-33, 37 begin 2.95-c
34-36 (6.95, 52-Yasuda back-up, Collector Wallpaper pgs., 38-Mecca-a, Akira Pack, Film, Kaneda Has Fleet Of Bikes!, Mad-arama pinups 10.00

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2-Ayers-r/Marvel 3.00
3-Nine-r/comics 4.00
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ALIENS (Based on Dark Horse Presents #26) May 1988-No. 9 July 1989 (1.95, B&W mini-series)
1-Begin-r/Aliens Magazine 4 comics 25.00
1-Second printing 5.00
1-Third - Sixth printings 2.00
2 10.00
2-Second printing 3.00
2-Third printing 2.00
3 7.00
4 5.00
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Aliens Museum Edition (See Dark Horse Presents) 10.00
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1 (2.45) 8.00
1 (2.45) 2nd printing (90, 2.25) 2.25
2-4 5.00
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June 1992-No. 3 Aug. 1992 (2.50, color mini-series)
1-3-Austin painted-c 2.50
...BIOGENERIS
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1-4 2.50
...COLONIAL MARINES
Aug. 1993-No. 10 July 1994 (2.50 color, limited series)
1-10 2.50
...EARTH ANGER
June 1994 (2.95, color, one shot) w/ Byrne-a/story w/approx-end c 3.00
...EARTH WAR
June 1990-No. 4 Oct. 1990 (2.50, color, limited series)
1 Sam Kieth sign-a 8.00
1-2nd print 10.00
2 7.00
3-4 5.00
...GENOCIDE
Nov. 1991-No. 4 Feb. 1992 (2.50, color mini-series)
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...HIVE
Feb. 1992-No. 4 May 1992 (2.50 color mini-series)
1-4 Austin painted-c 2.50
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Sept. 1993-No. 4 Jan. 1994 (2.50, color, mini-series)
1-4 Austin painted-c 2.50
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May 1992 (2.95, color one-shot, 52 pgs.) w/ Foiler Alligator scrpts, painted-c/a 5.00
...SALVATION
Nov. 1992 (4.95, color one shot) w/ Dark Horse Comics 4'22 24 3.00
...MUSIC OF THE SPEARS
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1-4 2.50
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1-2 Edition painted-c 3 Covers p 2.50
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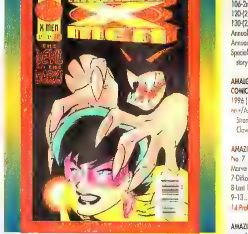

Advs. of the X-Men #7

...STRONGHOLD
May, 1994-No. 4 Sept. 1994 (2.50, color, mini-series)
1-4 2.50
...VS. PREDATOR (SEE DARK HORSE PRESENTS #26)
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Annual 1 (9/86, 1.25) 1.25
Annual 2-(12/87, 1.50) 1.25
Special (9/91) 66/92, 2.50) Wolverine/ story 2.50

AMALGAM AGE OF COMICS, THE: THE DC COMICS COLLECTION
1996 (12.95, color, trade paperback)
r-/Amazon, Amazons, Doctor Strangefate, JLA, Legends of the Dark Claw & Super Soldier 13.00

AMAZING ADULT FANTASY
No. 7 Dec. 1961-No. 14, June 1962
Warren Comics Group (AMI)
7 Orbit-c/a in all 525.00
8 last 10¢ issue 420.00
9-13 375.00
14 Prof. X prototype 420.00

AMAZING ADVENTURES
June, 1961-No. 6, Nov. 1961
Marvel Comics Group (AMI)
1 Origin Dr. Droom (1st Marvel Super Hero) Ditko & Kirby-a in all. Kirby monst 1,100.00
2 450.00
3-6 6-last Dr Droom 385.00

AMAZING ADVENTURES
Aug. 1970-No. 39, Nov. 1976

TRIVIA
Welcome to the Overstreet's FAN Trivia Challenge!

Marvel Comics Group
1-Hulk meets Sky Kaby-it ! 4, ends #10) & Black Widow (ends #8) double feature begins 30.00
2-4 ..... 10.00
5-8-Nick Adams-c 18.00
9, 10-Magneto app. 10.00
11-New Beat begins
(1st app.), ends #17 ..... 40.00
12-17 13-Brotherhood of Evil Mutants app. 7.00
18-1st app. Klhteen, N. Adams-c 18.00
19-39 ..... 5.00

AMAZING FANTASY
No. 15, Aug. 1962 (Sept. 1962 in indicia) Marvel Comics Group (ANF)
15-Origin & 1st app. Spider-Man by Ditko (11 pgs.); 1st app. Aunt May & Uncle Ben; Kirby/Ditko c-15 pgs.)

GD	FN	NM
1733.00	5200.00	26,000.00

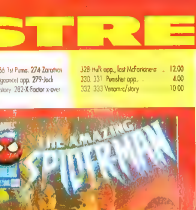
AMAZING FANTASY
No. 16, Dec. 1995-No. 18, Mar. 1996 ($3.95, color)
Marvel Comics
16-1/6 Brooks-c/Paul Lee-a; Spider-Man app. 4.00

AMAZING SCARLET SPIDER
Nov. 1995-No. 2, Jan. 1995 (1 pg. color)
Marvel Comics
1-2-replaces "Amazing Spider-Man" 2.00

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, THE
Mar. 1963-Sept 1995, Dec. 1995-Present
Marvel Comics Group
1-Origin retold; Ditko-c/a #1-38)
Kirby/Ditko-c, 1st app. Vulture-c/a-1 per
[nn-V/FF #12 as 1st Marvel x-over] 1,000.00

GD	FN	NM
1200.00	3600.00	18,000.00

1 (Golden Records Reprint) 160.00
(with Golden Records (1966)) 275.00
1-1st app. The Vulture 265.00
2-1st app. Doc Octopus 1865.00
4-Origin & 1st app. The Sandman 1500.00
5-Dr. Doom app 1,000.00
6, 8, 9, 10 ..... 975.00
7, 9, 12-Ditko F/F two-page story 700.00
9-Origin & 1st app. Electro 765.00
11, 12 10-Doc Octopus returns
Spidey c-story 430.00
13-1st app. Mysterio 525.00
14-1st app. Dr. Octopus Goblin (Norman Osborn), Hulk x-over 1300.00
15-1st app. Known The Hunter, 1st mention of Mary Jane Watson (not shown) 455.00
16-1st Daredevil x-over (yellow costume) 350.00
17 2nd app. Green Goblin (c/story) ..500.00
18-1st app. Ned Leeds (later Hobgoblin) 325.00
19-Sandman app. 260.00
20-1st app. & origin The Scorpion 315.00
21-2nd app. The Beetle (see Str. Tales#123) 210.00
22 1st app. Princess Python 190.00
23 2nd app. Green Goblin (c/ pg.) 290.00
24 ..... 170.00
25-1st app. Mary Jane Watson (cameo) (face not shown) but attributed as Mary (one) 260.00
26-6th app. Green Goblin, 1st Crime Master 220.00
27, 28 -2nd app. Green Goblin 215.00
28 Origin 1st app. Molten Man 205.00
29, 30 ..... 140.00
31, 38 31 intro Harry Osborn (later becomes 2nd Gr. Goblin), Green Slug, & Prof. Warren 38-last Ditko issue, 2nd app. Mary Jane Watson (cameo, face not shown, 7/66) 135.00
39-Green Goblin-c/story; id revealed 175.00
40-Origin Green Goblin (1st new story) 275.00
41-1st app. Illtmo 120.00
42 3rd app. Mary Jane Watson (cameo, face 2 panels) (a new face from a diferent hair) 160.00
43, 49 ..... 80.00
50-Intro & origin II (6/7) 100.00
51 2nd app. of Kingpin 125.00
52, 60, 56 intro Capt. George Stacy 65.00
61-74, 61, 70-Kingpin app. 69 Kingpin-c 60.00
76-Last Ditko issue 40.00
75-89, 91-93, 95, 99 84, 85-Kingpin-c/ stories 40.00
90-Death of Capt. Stacy 42.00
94-Origin retold 58.00
96-98; Ding books not approved by CCA. Green Goblin-c/story, 97,98 Green Goblin-c 75.00
100-Anniversary issue (9/71) 190.00
101-1st app. Madbus, last 15¢ issue (10/71) 160.00
102-2nd printing (9/92, silver ink) 2.50
103-Origin/2nd app. Madbus (25¢, 52 pgs.) 110.00
102-118 109-Dr. Strange-c/story (6/72) 35.00
119, 120-Spider-Man vs. Hulk 38.00
121-Green Goblin x/o Green Story 110.00
122-Death of Green Goblin 130.00
123-128, 123-Cage app. 124-Iron Man, Iron Man Weld (9/73), origin #125 ..... 24.00
129-1st app. Jackal & The Punisher (2/74) 250.00
130-133, 138-141, 132-160 130-Last 20¢ issue 16.00
134-Punisher cameo app. (2/74) 20.00
135-2nd full Punisher app (8/74) 65.00
136-Reprints Green Goblin (Norm) Osborn) 40.00
137-Green Goblin-c/story (Norm Osborn) 40.00
142, 143-Green Story clone cameos 24.00
144-147, 146 full app. Green Story clone 18.00
145, 148-Green Story clone storyline cont
147-Spider-Man learns Stacy is a clone 18.00
148-Jackal revealed 25.00
149-Spider-Man clone is begin, origin all Jackal 18.00
150-Spider-Man decision he is not the clone 55.00
151-Spider-Man discovers id clone body 35.00
161-Punisher cameo, Nightcrawler app. 10.00
162-Punisher, Nightcrawler app. 10.00
163-173, 181-190 169-Clone story recapped 181-Origin retold 8.00
174, 175-Punisher app. 15.00
176, 180-Green Goblin app 18.00
177-193 193-199, 203 208, 210-219 ..... 5.00
194-1st app. Black Cat 16.00
200-Giant-origin issue (11/80) 30.00
201, 202-Punisher app. 15.00
204-Origin & 1st app. Calypso (10/80) 5.00
220-232, 225-Foolkiller-c/story (2/82) 4.00
238-1st app. Hobgoblin (Ned Leeds) (2/83) (w/Tarantula card-insert) 8.00
239-Wolverine cameo 25.00
239-1st Hobgoblin (Spidey battle (2nd app.) 45.00
240-243 246-248 241-Origin Vulture 4.00
246 Hobgoblin cameo (2nd app.) 10.00
245-Sally Donovan-w/Hobgoblin cameo, battles Spider-Man (10/83), Hobgoblin cameo (4th app.) 12.00
249-251-Hobgoblin/Spidey battle storyline 14.00
252-1st app. black costume for Spidey c3/84) 25.00
253-262, 253-1st Punx, 274 Zarathos (Spirit of Vengeance) app. 279-Jack O'Lantern's story 282-X factor x-over 3.00
258-Hulk app., Iron Man/Sentinel 4.00
283-287-Punisher app. 4.00
282, 283-Venom/c/story 10.00
288 Hulk app., Iron Man/Sentinel 2.25
289, 331-Punisher app. 4.00
292, 293-Venom/c/story 10.00



Amazing Spider-Man #416

294-296, 338-343 ..... 2.00
297-1st app. Puma, Hobgoblin cameo 8.00
298-Hobgoblin app. (review) 10.00
299-Full Hobgoblin app., origin M. J. Watson 25.00
300 Hobgoblin story 30.00
301 Hobgoblin story 13.00
302 Spider Man unmasked 10.00
303-1st app. Seven Sister (6/85) 7.00
304-Spider-Man decision he is not the clone 55.00
305-1st Spider-Man discovers id clone body 35.00
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307-Punisher cameo, Nightcrawler app. 10.00
308-Punisher app. 15.00
309-Punisher app. 15.00
310-Punisher app. 15.00
311-Punisher app. 15.00
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336-Punisher app. 15.00
337-Punisher app. 15.00
344-1st app. Cletus Kassady (Carnage) 12.00
345-1st full app. Cletus Kassady 15.00
346, 347-Venom app. 10.00
348, 349 351-359 359 (1.25-c) 3.00
350 (1.50, 52 pgs.)-Origin retold 3.00
360-Carnage cameo 9.00
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362-1st partial, silver-c 2.00
362, 363-Carnage & Venom-c/story 9.00
364-2nd partial 2.00
364, 366-374, 376-387 373-Venom back-up; 376-Carnage app. 378-Cardinal app. 379-Venom vs. Carnage, part 3. 381, 382-Hulk app. 383-The fury app. 384-Venom/Carnage app. 1.75
365 (2.95)-Silver hologram on c, pull out poster, 1st app Spider-Man 2099 ..... 5.00
375 (2.95)-Holochrome, Vs. Venom-c/story 4.00
388 (2.25, 68 pgs.)-Newsstand Edition, 2 back-up stories: Venom, Cardnes & Chasm 2.25
388-(2.95) Collectors Edition w/fabric-c 5.00
389-396, 398-399 401-416, 389-Begin 50-c, Green Goblin app., bound-in card sheet 394-Power & Responsibility Pt. 2 396-Daredevil-c & app. 403-Carnage app. 406-New Doc Octopus. 407-Human Torch Silver Sable, Sandman app. 409-Rosie Rhino app. 410-Carnage app. 2.00
414-The New app. 415-"Identity", Spidey vs. Sentinels 416-Ron Garney c/pc begins, w/card insert #418 "Revelation," Norman Osborn revealed app. 3.00
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397 (2.25)-Flip book w/Ultimate Spider-Man 2.25
ASD (2.95) Death of Aunt May 5.00
ASD (3.95) Death of Aunt May-Deluxe; embossed 6.00
ASD-Collector s Ed. Wrhrc 17.00
408 (2.95) variant-c, polybagged w/ cassette 3.00
Annual 1 ('64)-1st Sinister Six, new 48 pg. c/p 475.00
Annual 2 ('65)-New Doctor Strange x/o 70.00
Special 3 ('71/66) 28.00
Avengers vs Hulk x-over 85.00
Special 4 ('71/67)
Spider-Man/Human Torch (new 41 pg. story) 80.00
Special 5 ('74/68)-Peter Parker's parents, New 48 pg. Red Skull story 75.00
Special 6 ('71/69)-(41 pg. Sinister Six story from Annual #1 ..... 28.00
Special 7 ('72/70)-All reprints 28.00
Special 8 ('72/71)-All reprints 28.00
King Size 9 ('73)-1st/Spec. Spider-Man magazine (Green Goblin c/story, 40 pgs re-reprinted from ann. 38 pgs) 28.00
Annual 10-13 (1978-79-80 annuals, 12-Byrne-c 8.00
Annual 14 (1/80)-Miller c/p 9.00
Annual 15 ('81)-Punisher app., Miller c/a 18.00
Annual 16-20 (1982-86) 7.00
Annual 21 ('87)-Wedding issue, direct sales 10.00
Annual 21 ('87)-Wedding issue, newsstand 10.00
Annual 22 ('88)-Inhumanoy War 6.00
Annual 23 ('89)-Atlantis Attacks, Infinity Saga 5.00
Annual 24 ('90, 2.00) 4.00
Annual 25 ('91, 2.00)-1st solo Venom story 10.00
Annual 26 ('92, 2.25)-New Warriors-c/ story, Venom solo story found in Spidey 5-tie Annual #12) 7.00
Annual 27 ('93, 2.95)-Polybagged w/card, 1st app. Annex 3.00
Annual 28 ('94, 2.95, 68 pgs.)-New Carnage-c/story 3.00
Annual '95 (3.95)-Contains Spider-Man Countdown Clock 4.00

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN SUPER SPECIAL
Apr. 1995 (3.95, color, one-shot)
Marvel Comics
1-Flip book 4.00

AMAZING X-MEN
Mar. 1995-No. 4, July, 1995 (1.95, color, limited series)
Marvel Comics
1-Age of Apocalypse 5.00
2-4 ..... 2.00

AMAZON
April, 1990 (1.95, color)
DC Comics
1-"Arrulgan Comics" Byrne-c/a/o 2.00

AMAZON WOMAN
Feb. 1996-No. 4, May, 1996 (2.95, B&W) (limited series, mature readers)
Eclipse
1-1 Item Sensation c/a 3.00

AMERICAN FREAK: A TALE OF THE UN-MEN
Feb. 1994-No. 5, June, 1994 (1.95, color, limited series)
DC Comics/Vertigo
1-5 ..... 2.00

AMERICAN SPLENDOR (Dork Storm)
COMIC-CON COMICS
Aug. 1996 (2.95, B&W, one-shot)
1-Fabian 3.00

...SPECIAL: A STEP OUT OF THE NEST
Aug. 1994 (2.95, 88 in. one shot)
1 Pt. Peter story 3.00
...WINDFALL
Sept. 1995-No. 2, Oct. 1995 (3.95, B&W mini-series)
1,2-Peter's 4.00

AMERICA'S BEST TV COMICS
1967 (Giant Size, 68 pgs., 25¢, one shot)
American Broadcasting Company
1-Fantastic Four, Casper, Archie, Spider-Man 70.00

ANGELA
Dec. 1994 - Present (2.95, color)
Image Comics/Todd McFarlane Productions
1 Gaiman / Capullo a. Spawn app. 14.00
2-3 Gaiman / Capullo a. 10.00
Special Edition Free Spawn 30.00
Special Edition Angela 35.00
1/2 (8.95) 1/2 pts special w/spin-ups 10.00

...GODDESS OF RAGE OF ANGELS
see GODIVA
Nov 1996 (2.50, color, one-shot)
Estrella / Cruz-a(p). Darkstyle preview
flip book; variants 2.50

ANGEL AND THE APE
Nov-Dec. 1968-No. 6, Sept-Oct 1969
Marvel/Perondelli Publications
1 ..... 23.00
2-6 ..... 15.00

ANGELS OF DESTRUCTION
Oct. 1996 (2.50, color, one-shot)
Alpha Comics
Screwjamin' 2.50

ANIMAL MAN
Sept. 1988-No. 89, Nov. 1995 (color material)
Comics/Vertigo (becomes Vertigo #57)
Rosario / a1-63 ..... 10.00
2 ..... 6.00
4 ..... 4.00
5 Arkham Inc. 3.00
26 1st Negan '57 SOV 26-Kent Gionti
Thomson script 2.50
34-37, 51, 52, 57-89 ..... 1.95
2 95 52 pgs. size issue by Tom Veitch
3.00
1 50, 68 pgs. 3.00
82 60-Negan 1 95 ..... 2.00
89 83 Negan 2 25 ..... 2.25
Annual 1 ('93) 93 pgs. Children's Crusade pt. 2 ..... 4.00

ANIMAL MYSTIC (see DARK ONE)
1993-Present (2.95/3.50, B&W)
CD Comics
1 ..... 55.00
alternate a/c 85.00
2nd print 30.00
..... 50.00
3rd print (Sirius) 10.00
3 ..... 25.00
Zodiac poster reprint 4.00

ANIMAL WARS
1-10 (2.95, color, limited series)
Ape Entertainment
1-Joe Chiodo a. 3.00

ANIMANIACS
1995-Present (1.50, color)
DC Comics
1 ..... 1.50
Christmas Special ('12/94, 1.50) 1.50

ANTARIO
Aug. 1988-No. 6 July-Aug. 1989
Perondelli Periodical Publications
1 ..... 38.00
2-6 ..... 22.00

ANUMAN
1-6, 1982-No. 63, Aug-Sept. 1978

Perondelli Periodical Publications/DC Comics
1 Intro Gaiup 550.00
2 ..... 265.00
3-5 ..... 135.00
6-10 9-Sea Devils app. 80.00
11-20 ..... 70.00
21-23 26 40 ..... 55.00
33 Intro Aqua-Girl (see Adv. 266) 77.00
41 42 49 ..... 58.00
48-Origin reprinted 33.00
50-52 Deadman by N. Adams 42.00
53-56 56-57-(4/77) 30.00
57-63 57-(8/77) 58-Origin retold 7.00
...
...
...

Lander Night Studios
no-photo c.....10.00

TOWER OF SHADOWS
(Creatures On The Loose #10 on)
Sept. 1969-No. 9, Jan. 1971
Marvel Comics Group
1-Steranko, Craig c 10.00
2,3: 2-Neal Adams a. 3-Smith, Tuska a. 10.00
4-10 ..... 7.00
4-Marie Severin c 7.00
6,7-Palmiotti, Wood a 10.00
6, 8-Wood art. 8 Wrightson c 7.00
9-Wrightson c 6.00
Special 1 (12/71)-Adamo c 6.00

TREEHOUSE OF HORROR
1995/1996 (# 0?57.50, color, Arnold Brigg Comics)
1-(0.99), 98 Grennan-pc, Allred Robinson, Smith-c 4.00
2-(2.50, '96) Grenning-c, Dini, Briggs 2.50

TRIBAL FORCE
Aug. 1996 (2.50, color)
Mystic Comics
1-"Special Edition" on cover 2.50

TROLL (Image Comics/Extreme Studios)
Dec. 1993 (2.50, color, one shot, 44 pgs.)
1-Includes c/sht), Liefeld script. 2.50
Halloween Special (1994, 2.95) Manix cvp 3.00

...If
July, 1994 (2.95, color, 52 pgs. one-shot)
1-Square-bound-binding 4.00
...ONCE A HERO
Aug. 1994 (2.50, color, one-shot 2.50

TROUBLED SOULS
1989 (# 95, color gregoric none), Hermetic
rev-Evans-c/We.Cross-a 10.00

TROUBLEMAN
June, 1996 Present
(2.25, color, limited series)
Image Comics/Wetown Hachmeyerks
1-3 ..... 2.25

TRUE FAITH
1990 (# 95, color, graphic novel)
Fleetway
re-Garth Ennis-c 10.00

TUG & BUSTER
Nov. 1995-Present (2.95, B&W, bi-weekly)
Art & Soul Comics
1-Arthur Hampel-a 3.00

TUROK, DINOSAUR HUNTER
(See Magnus #12)
June, 1997-Present (2.50, color)
Valiant
1 (2.50)-Chromium & foil-c 3.50
1 Gold fx-c variant 8.00
0, 2-47: 0-(7/95) origin sty. 4-Andor app. 5-Death of Andor 11-Howard-a. 16-Cross Effect 2.50
Yearbook 1 ('94, 3.95, 52 pgs.) 4.00
...The Hunted-(1.95, price omitted on #1, #2-2.50) 1,2: Deodato-a(p) 2.50

TUROK, SON OF STONE
No. 596, 12/54-No. 29, 9/62
No. 30, 12/62-No. 91, 7/74
No. 92, 9/74-No. 125, 1/80
No. 126, 2/81-No. 130, 4/82
No. 131 Pub. Co. 4?-29/Gold Key #

30-85/Gold Key or Whitman
#86-125/Whitman #126 on
4 Color 596, 12/54-#1? 1st origin
Turok & Andar Jumper c 675.00
4-Color 656 (10/55)(#2) 1st mention of Turok 400.00
3: 3-5, 5b, 6 ..... 225.00
6-9, 10 ..... 150.00
11-20: 17-Prehistoric pygmies 90.00
21-30 ..... 60.00
31-40: 31-Grey ape story 50.00
41-50 ..... 38.00
51-60: 58-Flying saucer-c/story 32.00
61-70: 62-12 & 15 cent variants 25.00
71-84: 84-Origin & 1st app. Nuke 16.00
85-130: 114, 115-52 pgs. 8.00
Giant 1 (30031-011)(11/66)-Bolle-c, #110-12 & 16 pls cover to #11 ..... 90.00
Giant 1-Same as above, but paper c 100.00

TV SPARKSTIX
Aug. 1978-No. 4 Feb. 1979
Marvel Comics Group
1-Horror-Barbera TV tie-in 6.00
2, 4 ..... 3.00
3-Tothc/a 5.00

12 O'CLOCK HIGH (TV)
Jan-Mar, 1965 No. 2, Apr-June, 1965
(Photo-c)
Dell Publishing Co
1, 2 ..... 35.00

2099 (Marvel)
A.D.
May, 1995 (3.95), color)
1 Austere-c by Quesada/Palmiotti 4.00
...APOCALYPSE
Dec. 1995 (4.95, color)
1-Wrap-around Chromium-c, Ellis-s 5.00
...GENESIS
Jan, 1996 (4.95, color)
1-Chromium wrap-around-c. Ellis-s
1st app. Daredevil 2099 In Nelson 2099 app. 5.00
...UNLIMITED
Sept. 1993 Present (3.95, color. 68 pgs.)
1-Origin pgs. Hulk 2099 & Begins
1-3 Spidey 2099 app., 9-J. Roberts-c, un-Wars, Nicnoy Calfiora 4.00
...WORLD OF DOOM SPECIAL
Nov. 1995 (2.95, color, one-shot)
1 Doom's "Control with Armies" 2.25
...WORLD OF TOMORROW
Sept. 1996-Present (2.50, color)
1-3 1-wrap-around-c. 2-w/bound-in card 2.50

21
Feb, 1996 No. 3, Apr, 1996 (2.50, color)
Image Comics/Top Cow Productions
1-Stan Weirs-s 2.50
1-variant-c. 3.00

22 BEDDS
Mar, 1996-Present (2.95, color)
Event Comics
1-DiNicolas-s 3.00
2-variant-c 5.00
3-variant-c 4.00

TWILIGHT ZONE, THE (TV)
No. 1?72, 3-5/61-No. 91, 4/79.
No. 92, 5/82
Dell Publishing/Gold Key/Whitman #92
4-Color 1173 ..... 180.00
4-Color 1288 ..... 110.00
01 860-207 (5?/62, 15¢) 78.00

12-860-210 (# 10, 6?/64-Evans-a(3) 78.00
1 (11/62, Gold Key)-Crandell-a 90.00
2 ..... 60.00

11 12-Deodato-c 1.50
nobody (2000, signed) 10.00
unsigned #2 (# on 2.50) Black Knight 3.00

Ultraforce V2#7

3-11: 3, 4, 9-Retro-c 40.00
12-Wilkinson-a 30.00
13-15: 13,15-Crandell-a, 14-Orlando/Crandell/Ramos-a 30.00
16-20 ..... 20.00
21, 22: 26-Flying saucer-c/story 15.00
23-32 ..... 6.00
33-51: 43-Crandell-a. 51-Williamson-a 5.00
52-70 ..... 3.00
71-92: 83, 84-(?) pgs.) 2.00
Xmas Comic #1 (1978) 3-1/4 x 6-1/2") 2.00

ULTRAFORCE
Aug. 1994-No. 10 Aug. 1995 (# 95, color)
Malibu Comics
0-(9/94, 2.50) 2.50
1-(2.50, 44 pgs.)-w/bound-in trading card, Icon consists of Prime, Prototype, Pantaloon, Flux, Glacial, Contrary & Topaz 2.50
1-Holographic-c. no price 15.00
2-5-(10/94, 1.95) 2.00
2 (12.50)-Fluorescent logo, variant edition stamp on c 4.00
6-11: 6-Image 2.50-c. 8-10-Black Knight app. 11-Weirs/Deodato Studios-s. 12-Malibu "Future" Ultraforce (6/96) 0.75
...Avengers Prelude 1 (2.00) 2.50
...Avengers 1 (3.95)-Foil-c, Portacio/Ellis-s 4.00
...Spider-Man (3.95) 2 covers, Green Goblin app. 4.00

ULTRAFORCE (2nd Series)
Nov. 1995-Present (1.50, color)
Malibu Comics
Infinity, 1-12: Infinity Shock-c/Portacio-c
1 Regular-c/Prototech-c 2-Pop book "Phoenix Resurrection" pt. 7. 1-7-Ellis-s returns to Marvel Universe 2.50

ULTRAVERSE (Malibu)
...DOUBLE FEATURE
Jan. 1995 (3.95, color)
1-(68 pgs.) Flip-c, featuring Prime and Sabre-e 4.00
...ORIGINS
Jan. 1994 (99¢, color)
1-Godshield-c, 2 pg. origins all characters 3.00
1 Newsstand ed., (69¢-c, no godshield 3.00
...PREMIERE
1994 (issue, give away)
0-Ordered thru mail w/coupons 5.00
...UNLIMITED
June, 1996 (2.50, color)
1-Kelley Jones-c 2.50
...YEAR TWO
Aug. 1995 (4.95, color)
nn 5.00
...ZERO: THE DEATH OF THE SQUAD
Apr. 1995-No. 4, July, 1995 (2.95, color)
1-4: 2-Codename: Firestorm back story 3.00

UNCANNY ORIGINS
Sept. 1996-Present (99¢, color)
Marvel Comics
1 (6.1)-Cyclops, 2-Quicksilver 3-Archangel 4-Firelord, 5-Hulk 1.00

UNCANNY TALES
Dec. 1973-No. 12, Oct. 1975
Marvel Comics Group
1-12: 1-Crandell-c/Uncanny Tales #9 (1950s) 2.50

UNCANNY X-MEN, THE
(also see Giant-Size X-Men)

Feb. 1981-Present (THE X-MEN #1 141)
Marvel Comics Group
142-Rachel app. 22.00
143-Lilae Byrne. a/c 10.00
144, 150: 150-Double size 8.00
151-157, 159-161, 163, 164 ..... 6.00
158: 1st app. Rogue -v X-Men 15.00
162-Wolverine solo story 10.00
165-Paul Smith art begins, ends #173? 00
166-Double size, Paul Smith a-p, c 7.00
167-170: 167-New Mutants/X-Men 1st app. some date as New Mutants #1 (3/83); contains skin "haircut" decals 3.00
171-Rogue joins The X-Men, see Avengers Annual #10 for 1st app. 13.00
172-174: 172, 173-Wolverine solo story 4.00
175-Double size 10.00
176-185: 182-Rogue solo story, 184-1st app. Forge 5.00
186-(52 pgs.)-J.R. Smith/Austin-a 5.50
187-192, 194-199 ..... 4.50
193-Double size special, 100th app. New X-Men; 1st app. Warpath 10.00
200-(12/85, 1.25, 52 pgs.) 10.00
201 1st app. baby Nathan (1/86)
1st Portacio-c/a(1) in X-Men 25.00
202-204: 206-209: 204-2nd Portacio-(p) on X-Men 6.00
205-Wolverine solo story by Barry Smith 17.00
210, 211: 210-213-Mutant Massacre 20.00
212, 213-Wolverine Battles Sabretooth
212-(12/86)-See X-Factor #10 ..... 35.00
214-221: 223, 224, 219-mask pins (7/87) 5.00
222-Wolverine battles Sabretooth-c/story 15.00
225-227-Fall Of The Mutants. 226-1st pgs 10.00
228-239, 241 ..... 5.00
240-Sabretooth app. 7.00
242-Double size. Inferno tie-in 5.00
243, 245-247: 245-Lobo(p) 4.00
244-1st app. Jubilee 25.00
248-1st Jim Lee art on X-Men 10.00
249, 2nd printing (92, 1.25) 3.00
249-252: 252-Jim Lee c 3.00
253, 255: 253-All new X-Men begin 5.00
254-Jim Lee c 5.00
256, 257-Jim Lee c 12.00
258-Wolverine solo story-Jae-a 14.00
259-Silver-c/a-c/a Kelley Jones-c 6.00
260-265: 260, 261, 264-Jae-c 4.00
266-1st full app. Gambit (See Annual 14) 40.00
267-New c/a series begins, 2nd full Gambit app. 17.00
268-Iceman, Wolverine, Cast America, Black Widow team-up 23.00
268 2nd print 4.00
269-Jae-c 7.00
270-X-Factor Agenda begins 7.00
270-Gold 2nd printing 4.00
271, 272 X Tinction Agenda 8.00
273-New Mutants (Cable) & X-Factor app. 7.00
274 ..... 6.00
275-21.50, 52 pgs.)-Foil-c 7.00
275-Gold 2nd printing 2.50
276-280, 277 Jae Lee-c/a 3.00
281-New X-Men team, Byrne scripts & Wilson Portacio-c/a begin (white logo) 7.00
281-2nd printing (red logo) 2.00

282-1st app. Bishop (cover + 1 pg.) ..15.00
282-Interdtle inv. 2nd printing (1.00-a) ..10.00
283-1st full app. Bishop 18.00
284-293: 287 Bishop prin issues
290-Lost Portacio-c/a
294-Brandon Peterson-a begins-exits 299
2.50
294-296-11 304 Pohlbaggad w/tracking card
2.50
297-299, 301-303, 305-309, 311
2.00
300-(3.95, 66 pgs.) Hulk-grafic fol-c, Rambo, Jr-c/a 5.00
304-(2.95, 68 pgs.) Magneto tobgrave conc; 304-end issue, Jae-Lee-a (4 pgs.) 7.00
307-Gold ed. 3.50
310-(1.95) w/Sound w tracking card sheet 2.50
312-321: 312-begin 1.50/w/ bound-in card sheet 2.00
316, 317 (2.95)-Fold enhanced editions
3.00
313-320-(1.95) Dallas. 320-Gold ed.
322-Onslaught 2.50
323, 324, 326-340: 322-Onslaught 325-return from "Age of Apocalypse". 328-Sabretooth-c. 329, 330-Dr. Strange app. 331-White Queen-c/app. 334-Juggernaut app., w/"Onslaught Update"
335-Onslaught, Avengers, Apocalypse, X-Men app. 336-"Onslaught"
338-Archangel's wings return to normal. Pyro app. 339-Spider-Man app.
340-Final Onslaught 2.00
325-(3.95) Anniversary issue, Gatefold c
..... 5.00
Special 1 (12/92) Kelly-c/a 6.00
Special 2 (1/94) (4.95) 5.00
Annual 3 ('79)-New set; Wolverine vsl ex-old yellow costume 17.00
Annual 4 ('80)-Dr. Strange-r/story 7.50
Annual 5 ('81) 6.00
Annual 6-8 (82-84: 52 pgs.) 6-Orcasa app. 5.00
Annual 9 ('1983) Adams-a, new Huntara cover from New Mutants Special #1 ..... 13.00
Annual 10 ('1986) Art Adams-a 11.00
Annual 11 ('87) 3.50
Annual 12 ('88) Eva. War, Art Adams-a(p) 4.00
Annual 13 ('89) Adams-Attacks 3.50
Annual 14 ('90, 2.00)-1st app. Gambit (savior app.), Art Adams-c/a
..... 12.00
Annual 15('91) 2.00/ 4 pg. segm; Wolverine saa back-up story, 4th app. X-Force 4.00
Annual 16 ('92, 2.25)-Jae Lee-c/a (2 stories) 2.50
Annual 17 ('93, 2.95) Pohlbaggad w/card 3.50
Annual 18 ('94, 2.95, 68 pgs.) 4.00
The Dark Phoenix Saga (1990, 12.95) 13.00
1(5-11)1.95, 2.95)-wrap-around-c 4.00
1(6-12.95)-wrap-around-c 3.00

UNCANNY X-MEN AND THE NEW TEEN TITANS, THE
1990 (3.95), cover, one-shot
Marvel Comics/DC Comics
1-r/DC AND MARVEL PRESENTS 4.00

UNCANNY X-MEN AT THE STATE FAIR IN TEXAS, THE
1983 (Non-shot, give-away)
Marvel Comics Group

w/ Supplement to The Dallas Times Herald
..... 10.00

UNCANNY X-MEN IN DAYS OF FUTURE PAST, THE
1989 (3.95, color, 52 pages)
Marvel Comics Group
w/-Byrne/Austin-r 5.00

UNDERDOG (TV)
July, 1970-No. 10, Jan., 1972, Mar. 1973-No. 22, Feb., 1979
Charlton Comics/Gold Key
1 (1st series, Charlton) 60.00
2-10 ..... 35.00
11-22: 13-Gold Key 15.00
1 (7-30)-1st app. Shoes of Solitude
..... 17.00

UNDERWORLD UNLEASHED
Nov. 1995-No. 3, Jan. 1996 (2.95, cover painted series.
DC Comics
1-3 Waid-s 3.00
Apokolips Dark Uprising 1
(1.95) one shot 2.00
Batman Dies + Asylum 1
(2.95, one-shot) Alan Scott, Phantom Stranger, Zatanna-app 3.00
Aliens Hell's Sentries 1-
(2.95, one-shot) Alan Scott, Phantom Stranger, Zatanna-app 3.00
Patterns of Fear (2.95, one shot) 3.00

UNEARTHLY SPECTACULARS
Oct. 1963-No. 2, Mar. 1967
(#1 12¢, 2, 3 25¢ giants)
Harvey Publications
1-Tiger Boy, Simon-c 15.00
2-Jack O. Frost, Tiger Boy & Three Rocketmen app., Williamson, Wood, Kamin-a 25.00
3-Jack O. Frost app., Williamson/Crandall-c 25.00

UNEXPECTED, THE (Formerly Tales of the ... No. 103, Feb-Mar. 1968-No. 222, May, 1982
National Periodical Publications/DC Comics
103-Bag's 124 issues 20.00
104-113: 113 Last 124 issue 15.00
114,115,117,118,120, 122-127 ..... 6.00
116-Intro Ragman (1) 129-Wrightson-c 8.00
129-162: 132-136 (52 pgs.) 3.00
157-162-(100 pgs.) 3.00
163-188, 187-189-(64 pgs.) 1.60
189-(52 pgs.) 192-195 (1.00, 68 pgs.) 2.00
191 Ragan-r/(#1 (1.00, 68 pgs.) 3.00
196-221: 200-Return of Johnny Peril.. 1.50

UNION
June, 1993-No. 0, July, 1994 (1.95 color)
Image Comics/Wildstorm Productions
0-#7/94, 2.50) 2.50
0-Alternate Portacio-c, see Deathblow #5
..... 10.00
1 (2.50) Embossed foil-c, Texeira-c/a-c/i 2.50
1-(1.95) Newsstand ed.; w/a-i to 6 ..... 2.00
2-4: 4 (7/94) 2.00

UNION
Feb. 1995-Present (2.50 color)
Image Comics/Wildstorm Productions
1-3, 5-9 ..... 2.50
4 (1.95) Newsstand Wildstorm Rising Pt 3 ..... 2.00
6 (2.50) Direct Market; Wildstorm Rising Pt 5; bound-in card 2.50

UNITY
No. 0, Aug, 1992 No. 1 1992
(Free, color)
Valiant
0 (Blue) Smith-c/a-r/pages
Unity x-overs in all Valiant titles. Free to everyone that bought all 8 Unity x-over titles that month 4.00
0 Red logo; scarce (15,000 made) 35.00
0 Gold variant 10.00
1 Epilogue to Unity x-overs; copy available for every 8 Unity boxes ordered 4.00
(Gold) Promotional copy 10.00
1-Platinum/Promo copy scarce 15.00
Yearbook 1 ('1995, 2.95)-1994 in review 4.00

UNIVERSAL MONSTERS
1993 (3.95/4.95, color 52 pgs.)
Dark Horse Comics
Frankenstein-Ian Gibbons-c/a; Mummy adaptation, painted-c 4.00

Vampirella of Draculon #5

Draculon (4.95), Original movie adaptation 5.00
Mummy-sc (4.95)-Original movie adaptation 5.00
Creature from the Black Lagoon (4.95) Adams/Austin-c/a 5.00

UNKNOWN SOLDIER
(Formerly Star-Spangled War Stories)
255, Apr-May 1977-No. 266, Oct. 1982
National Periodical Publications/DC Comics
255-268: 261 Enemy Ace begins 2.00

UNKNOWN WORLDS
Aug. 1950-No. 57, Aug. 1967
American Comics Group
1-Whitney-c/a most issues 125.00
2-5: 2-Dracula-c/story 70.00
6-11, 9-Dracula-c/story. 11 last 104 issue 50.00
12-19, 124 issues thru #57 ..... 40.00
20-Horse comics (12/1-feb-ed) 45.00
21-35 ..... 26.00
36-"The Feeds vs. Hanando" by Craig; most popular ACG story ever 32.00
37-46 ..... 24.00
47 W/Ditko-c/Adms. into the Unknown #96, 3 pgs. Craig-r. 26.00
48 57 do 50 -54 Ditko-c, 53-Frankenstein 21.00

UNKNOWN WORLDS OF SCIENCE FICTION
Jan. 1975-No. 13, Nov. 1975
1-Adkins-classic bx
Monster Gallery
Williamson/Frazetta-(8pgs)
Frankenstein-Wood-a(1 pg.)
Poe Kaluta-a, Austin-c 4.00
2-4 Perez-a 2.00
Spec. #1 (76, 100 pgs., Newton painted-c 3.00

UNTOLD LEGEND OF THE BATMAN, THE
July 1980-No. 3, Sept 1980 (Mini-series)
DC Comics
1-Origin, Joker-c, Byrne-a 4.00
2, 3 ..... 3.00
1-3: Batman Comes great-arts (1989, 28 pgs., 69¢); 1st & 2nd printings exist 2.50

UNUSUAL MONSTERS
Sept. 1993 Present (1.95, color)
Marvel Comics
1-Busch-c/Cliffs-a(p) in all 2.50
2-16 ..... 1.00

UNUSUAL TALES (Elvis Beetle #30 on)
Nov. 1955-No. 49, Mar/Apr. 1965
Charlton Comics
1 ..... 130.00
2 ..... 65.00
3-5 ..... 40.00
6-Ditko-c only 50.00
7, 8-Ditko-c/a 115.00
9-Ditko-c/a (20 pgs.) 120.00
10-Ditko-c/a(4) 145.00
11-(3/58, 68 pgs.)-Ditko-c(4), 13 ..... 135.00
12, 14-Ditko-a 85.00
15, 16-20 ..... 30.00
17-Ditko-c/a 90.00
21, 26, 28 ..... 30.00
22, 23, 25-27, 29-Ditko-a 60.00
30-49 ..... 18.00

USAGI YOJIMBO (See Space Usagi)
July, 1987-No. 36? (2.00, B&W)
Fantagraphics Books
1 ..... 3.00
2-9, 11-28 ..... 2.00
1, 8, 10-2nd printings (2.00) 2.00
10-TMNT app. 3.00
29-36? (2.25-cl 2.25
Color Special 1 ('01/89, 2.95) 3.00
Summer Special 1 (1986, 2.75, B&W) 3.00

USAGI YOJIMBO (See Space Usagi)
Apr. 1996-No. 4, July, 1996
(2.95, B&W)
Dark Horse Comics
V3 #1-6-Sakai-c/a/ 3.00

VAMPIRE GIRLS: CALIFORNIA 1969
May, 1996-Present (2.95, B&W)
Angel Entertainment
0, 1 ..... 3.00
0-(10,000 made) 10.00
0-(20,000 "3-D Nude Picture" embossed)-c 20.00
1-(10,000 Nude Ed. 10.00
1-(15,000 Platinum Nude Ed. 15.00

VAMPIRE LESTAT, THE
Jan, 1990-No. 12, 1991
(2.50, mini-series)
Innovation
1 ..... 35.00
1-2nd print 5.00
2 ..... 15.00
2-2nd & 3rd printings 2.50
3-5 ..... 10.00
6-12 ..... 5.00
Note: 2nd printings of most issues exist and are worth cover price.

VAMPIRELLA
Sept. 1969-No. 112, Feb. 1983, No. 113, Jan. 1988
Warren Publishing Co
(68/#) magazine size)
1-Intro Vampirella, Frazetta-c 250.00
2-Anniversary series begins; ends #12 ..... 130.00
5 Scarce, low distribution 300.00
6-7, 5, 7-Frazetta-c 50.00
8-Vampirella begins in serious series 90.00
9-Smith art; Bons cover 70.00
10-No Vampirella story 30.00
11-15: 11-Origin & 1st app. Pendragon 20.00

TRIVIA
Which planet did the Wildcats fight on in issue #1?
Answer on page 279

16-18, 20-25 ... 38.00
19 (1973 Annual) ... 45.00
26, 28-36, 38-40, 51 Fireside ... 25.00
27 (1974 Annual) ... 25.00
37 (1975 Annual) ... 30.00
41-46, 47-50 ... 20.00
Origin of Wampyre reprint (10/73) ... 25.00
51-66,68,70,72,73,75-99 ... 15.00
67,69,71,74: Photo-c ... 25.00
100 (96 pgs.) Reprint special, origin retold ... 45.00
101-110, 112 ... 30.00
113 Giant Collector's Edition (2.50) ... 35.00
113 (1988) out of
1st Items Comics issue (scarce) ... 150.00
Annual 1 (1972): New origin Vampirella ... 225.00
Special 1 (1977, large squarebound) ... 25.00

VAMPIRELLA (HARRIS COMICS)
(Also see Curse Flip Book, Vengeance of...)
Nov. 1992 No. 5, Nov. 1993 (2.95, color)
0 ... 4.00
0-Gold ... 45.00
1-Jim Balent inks B.A. Hughes; in #1-3 ... 40.00
1-2nd printing ... 7.00
1-(11/97, 2.95) Commemorative ... 3.50
2 ... 30.00
3-5: 3-5 contain certificates for free Dave Stevens Vampi poster 5-0 Barbarella ... 7.00
Vampirella 1996 (10/93, 5.95) #1, 4 ... 6.00

CLASSIC
Feb. 1995 No. 5, Nov. 1995 (2.95, color)
1-5-F. A. Gaarbeer; 1-4 Gonzalez pouch ... 3.00

...DEATH & DESTRUCTION
July, 1996-No. 3, Sept. 1996 (2.95, color limited series)
1-3 Conner-c/p; 1-Tuccio; 2,3-Hughes-c ... 3.00

...MORNING IN AMERICA
(1997-No. 4, 1997 (3.95, B&W, mini series)
1-All New Future painted-c ... 7.00
2-4 ... 5.00

DRAKULON
Jan., 1996-Present (2.95, color)
0.5-Sr. 3-pg.hologram w/card 4-Terc
0.5-Sr. 3-Terc ... 3.00

...PIN-UP SPECIAL
Dec. 1995 (2.95, color, one-shot)
1-Hughes-c, pin-ups by various ... 3.00
1-variant-c ... 10.00

...SAD WINGS OF DESTINY
Sept., 1996 (2.95, color, one-shot)
1-Mahfood-c ... 4.00

.../SHADOWHAWK: CREATURES OF THE NIGHT
1995 (4.95, color, limited series)
1 ... 5.00

...STRIKES
Sept., 1995-Present
(2.95, color, limited series)
1-2-Tuska-c/a; 2-Doedalone, pohlhagged w/cars; 3, 6-w/wrapper-c; Eudaimon-c/app. 5-Alamaze-c; 6-Terc 7-Silver Axe Ed., flip-book ... 3.00
3-Newsstand Ed., different photo-c ... 10.00
1-Limited Ed.; different photo-c ... 10.00

...25TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL
Oct. 1996 (6.95, color, one-shot)
nn-Famed J. Ackerman intro, Fessimire-c ... 6.00

VAMPIRE TALES
Aug. 1973-No. 11 June, 1975
(B&W magazine)
Marvel Comics Group
1-Morbius, the living Vampire begins by Morrow (1st solo Morbius series & 5th Morbius app.) ... 25.00
2-Intro Satana; Steranko-c ... 10.00
3, 4, 6-11: 3-Satana app. 6-1st Lilith app. 8-Blade app. (see Tomb of Dracula) ... 5.00
5-Origin Morbius ... 8.00
Annual 1 (10/75)-Month-by-49 ... 3.00

VAMPIRESS LUJURIA, THE
Feb., 1996-Present (2.95, color)
Brainstorm Comics
1-nudes/a-o ... 3.00
1-Gold (10.00, gold foil logo ... 10.00

VAMPS (DC Comics/Vertigo)
Aug. 1996 No. 6, Jan. 1995 (1.95, color limited series, mature readers)
1-Ballard-c ... 5.00
2-6-Ballard-c ... 3.00
TPB (9.95)-r ... 10.00

HOLLYWOOD & VINE
Feb. 1995-No. 4, July 1995
(2.25, color, limited series; mature readers)
1-6-Winslade-c ... 2.50

VANGUARD STRANGE VISITORS
Oct. 1996-Present
(2.95, B&W, limited series)
1 ... 3.00

VANGUARD ILLUSTRATED
(see WR: MONSTER)
Nov., 1983-No. 11, Oct. 1984
Pacific Comics
1-6, 8-11: 2-Dave Stevens-c ... 1.50
7-1st app. Mr. Monster ... 5.00

VAULT OF EVIL
Feb., 1973-No. 23, Nov. 1975
Marvel/Curtis Group
1-1950s reprints begin ... 3.00
2-23: 3,4-Brunner-c ... 1.75

VELOCITY
Nov. 1995-Present? (2.50, color)
Image Comics/Top Cow Productions
1-3-Barrie-c, 2-George Dragon-c/app. ... 3.00

VENGEANCE OF VAMPIRELLA
(see Warrior #26)
Apr., 1994-No. 23, Apr., 1996 (2.95, color)
Harris Comics
1 (3.50)-Quesada/Palmiotti "bloodlust" wraparound-c ... 20.00
1 (3.50) 2nd printing, blue foil-c ... 5.00
1-5 ... 40.00
2-Liefeld-c ... 12.00
3,4 ... 7.00
5-25: 8-Polybagged w/trading card 10-w/coupon for Hyde-25 poster 11, 19-Polybagged w/trading card 23-Fabry-c. 24-Deodato-c. 25-Quesada & Palmiotti-cnd foil-c ... 3.00
Bloodlust (95, 6.95, TPB) ... 7.00

...THE MYSTERY WALK
Nov. 1995-Present (2.95, color)
0 ... 3.00

VENOM (Marvel Comics)
...ALONG CAME A SPIDER
Jan, 1996-No. 4, Apr. 1996
(2.95, color, limited series)
1-4-Spider-Man, Carnage app ... 3.00

...CARNAGE UNLEASHED
Apr. 1995-No. 4, July 1995 (2.95, color, Limited series)
1-4 ... 3.00

Venom: Sinner Takes All #1

...FUNERAL PYRE
Aug. 1995-No. 3, Oct. 1995 (2.95, color, limited series)
1-3-1-Hitlo-gothi foil-c, Punisher app. in all ... 3.00

...LETHAL PROTECTOR
(See Amazing Spider-Man #398)
Feb. 1993-No. 6, July 1993
(2.95, limited series)
1-Red holo-grafx foil-c ... 5.00
1-Gold version! adds to rarities ... 20.00
1-Black + variant ... 150.00
2-6-Spider-Man app. in all ... 3.00

...NIGHTS OF VENGEANCE
Aug. 1994-No. 4, Nov. 1994
(2.95, color, limited series)
1-6: 1-Red foil-c ... 3.00

...SEPARATION ANXIETY
Dec. 1994-No. 4, Mar. 1995
(2.95, color, limited series)
1-4, 1-Embossed-c ... 3.00

...SINNER TAKES ALL
Aug. 1995 Present
(2.95 color, limited series)
1-5 ... 3.00

...SUPER SPECIAL
Aug. 1995 (3.95, color)
1-Flip book ... 4.00

...THE ENEMY WITHIN
Feb. 1994-No. 3, Apr. 1994
(2.95, color, limited series)
1-3: 2-Renaissance-c. 3-Andrews app.
1-Gillow-in-the-dark-c ... 3.00

... THE HUNGER
Aug. 1996-No. 4, Nov. 1996
(1.95, color, limited series)
1-4 ... 2.00

...THE HUNTED
May, 1996-No. 3, July, 1996
(2.95, color, limited series)
1-3, ... 3.00

... THE RACE
May, 1996-No. 3, July, 1996 (2.95, color, Limited series)
1-3, 1-Embossed-cover ... 3.00

... THE MADNESS
Nov. 1993-No. 2, Jan. 1994 (2.95, color limited series)
1-3. Kelley Jones c/a. 1 Embossed-c ... 3.00

...TOOTH AND CLAW
Dec., 1996-Present
(1.95 color limited series)
1-Wolverine-c/app ... 2.00

VENUS DOMINA
July, 1996 Present
(2.95/4.95, color, mature readers)
Varnia-c
1-4 (4.95) embossed-c, nudity-c. Dave Stevens-c ... 5.00
1-(2.95) San Diego Edition, Wing Bird-c/a ... 3.00

VERMILION
Oct. 1996-Present (2.25, color)
DC Comics/Helix
1-3-Jusco Shepard c/Dorkin-a ... 2.25

VIGILOTICA
May, 1995-Present
(2.95, color, adult readers)
Varoli
1, 2 ... 10.00
3-12: 9-Pullman. 10-nudity-c ... 3.00

VISIONS (DC COMICS)
(see ASSOCIATE VERTIGO)
...GALLERY
1995 (3.50, color one-shot)
1 pin-ups by various; McKeever-c ... 3.50

...JAM
Aug. 1993 (3.95, color, 68 pgs.)
1-various) ... 6.00

I-Gentleman by Gaiman, Swamp Thing, etc ... 4.00

...PREVIEW
1992 (7.95, cover .50 pgs.)
1-Vertigo preview. Sandman story by Gaiman ... 2.00

...VISITE: THE UNSEEN HAND
Sept. 1996-No. 4, Dec. 1996
(2.50, color, limited series)
1-4-Gibbons ... 2.50

...VISIONS
1993/1996-1995 (color)
Dr. Occult 1 (2.95, 7/96) ... 4.00
The Geek 1 (2.95, 6/93) ... 4.00
The Phantom Stranger 1 (3.50, 10/93) ... 3.50
The Raven 1 (4.95, color, 1995), Mélagare ... 5.00

V FOR VENDETTA
Sept. 1988-No. 10, May, 1989
(2.00, color, mini-series)
DC Comics
1-10: Alan Moore script in all ... 2.00
TPB (1990) 14.95) ... 15.00

VIGILANTE: CITY LIGHTS, PRAIRIE JUSTICE
Nov. 1993-No. 2 Feb. 1994
(2.50, color, limited series)
DC Comics
1-Miller cover ... 2.50

VIOLATOR (see Spawn #2)
May, 1994-No. 3 Aug. 1994
(1.95, color)
Image Comics/Todd McFarlane Productions
1-Alan Moore s ... 5.00
2-3-Alan Moore script; 2-3-Bolland
Seven-pack (set) ... 6.00

VIOLATOR VS. BADROCK
May, 1995-No. 4 Aug. 1995
(2.50, color, limited series)
Image Comics/Extreme Studios
1-4-Alan Moore s; 1-variant (3D) ... 3.00

VISIONS
No. 1, 1979-No. 5, 1983
(B&W, fanzine)
Vision Publications
1-Fleming Carrol stories ... 55.00
2-Fleming Carrol stories ... 30.00
3-Fleming Carrol stories ... 15.00
4-Fleming Carrol covers and inks ... 20.00
5 (1982)-1 page Fleming Carrol ... 7.00
Annual 1 for No. 4 Visions became anthology pub. edition of The Atlanta Fantasy Fair ... 5.00

VOGUE
Oct. 1995-Present
(2.50, color, limited series)
Image Comics/Extreme Studios
1-3 Liefeld-c ... 2.00
1-variant-c ... 3.00

VOODOO+ZEALOT: SKIN TRADE
Aug. 1995 (4.95, color, one-shot)
Image Comics/Wildstorm Productions
1 ... 5.00

VORTEX
1996 (2.95, color)
Eerie Comics
1, 1b-1b Kanisage-c ... 3.00

WALT DISNEY GIANT
Sept. 1995 Present

12 25, color, bi-monthly)
Gladstone Publishing
1-7 1 Horace/Life 2-in-1/Disc 5 #19
3 Barks/Rosa c 4 F Beck c, 7 Barks/
... 2 25

WALT DISNEY'S COMICS AND STORIES
No. 511, Nov, 1986 No. 567,
Apr. 1990 (Color)
No. 568, May, 1990-Present
Gladstone Publ./Disney/Gladstone
511-Wurzler app. ... 10.00
512, 513 ... 12.00
514-516, 520, 522, 523-Rosa c 7.00
517-519, 521, 527, 534, 547,
548-Infinity c, 547-Rosa c ... 3.00
548-11.50, 6/90 1st Disney sue ... 2.25
549, 551-570, 572, 573, 577-579, 581,
584 ... 2.00
550 (2.25) D. Duck by Barks ... 3.00
571-12.95, 98 pgs/D. Duck, Uncle Scrooge
by Barks from 1987 Cheerios Premium's
... 4.00
574-576, 580, 582, 583 (2.95, 68 pgs.)
... 4.00
585 (2.50, 52 pgs.) Reprints #140 ... 4.00
586, 587-11.50-Gladstone begins square
... 2.00
588-590 ... 2.00
600 (2.95, 68 pgs.) Lib. Color; 1st
stories by Barks, Rosa & Van Horn
... 3.00
601-607 (2.95, 68 pgs., bi-monthly)
601-Barks c; Rosa c/a; 602-Rosa c;
605-Walt Kelly c; 607-wraparound c
... 4.00
608 ... 2.00

WALT DISNEY'S DONALD AND MICKEY
(Formerly Walter and Donald)
No. 19, Sept, 1993-1995 (1.50, color)
The Bruce Hamilton Company/Gladstone
19, 21, 24, 26-30 -19-Barks, Murry-
23 Barks "Donald" story of WDCS
#146 ... 4.00
20 (2.95, 68 pgs.) Barks c ... 5.00
25 (2.95, 68 pgs.) ... 3.00

WALT DISNEY'S DONALD DUCK
Oct, 1986-No. 279, May, 1990, No. 280,
Sept, 1993-Present (Color)
Gladstone Publ
No. ... 10.00
247-249 ... 5.00
250-1.50, 68 pgs./Reprints FC #9 ... 15.00
253-256 ... 3.75
257-11.50, 52 pgs./-/Vacation Parade #1
... 4.00
258-260 ... 3.00
261-277 ... 2.25
278, 279-11.95, 52 pgs.) ... 2.50
280-285, 287-294, 280-Begin 1.50-c,
283-Rosa c/script & part c ... 2.25
286-12.95, 68 pgs./"Happy Birthday
Donald" c ... 3.50
295-300 295 Begin 1.50-c ... 1.50

WALT DISNEY'S DONALD DUCK ADVENTURES
Nov, 1987-No. 20, Apr, 1990 (95¢, color)
No. 21, Aug, 1993-Present (1.50, color)
Gladstone Publ./Disney Comics
1 ... 7.00
2-Officer Crisis #308 ... 3.00
3, 4, 6, 7, 9-11, 13, 15-18 ... 2.50
5, 8-Rosa art ... 4.00
12-Begin story/art of Barks poster ... 6.00
14-FC, 29 - The Mummy's Ring (Barks)
... 3.00
19, 20 (1.95, 68 pgs.) ... 3.00
21 Rosa c, r/Secret of Hondorica (3-D
#46) ... 2.25
22-UFC 282-The Polluted Parrot (Barks)
... 2.25
23 27 29 31 33, 21 23,29 Rosa c,
31 -Rosa/c, 33 -FC 4408 ... 2.00
28 (2.95, 68 pgs.)/UFC 199, Sheriff of
Bullet
Valley (Barks) ... 4.00
30 (2.95, 68 pgs.)/FC 367 "Christmas for
Shacktown" (Barks) ... 4.00
34 41 34-Begin 1.50-c 34, 35, 37-P
Block c/a ... 1.50

WALT DISNEY'S DONALD DUCK ADVENTURES
June, 1990-No. 38, July, 1993 (1.50, color)
Disney Comics
1-Rosa story & art (1st Disney issue) 4.00
2-38 ... 2.00

WALT DISNEY'S DONALD DUCK AND MICKEY MOUSE
1995-Present (1.50, color)
Gladstone Publishing
1 7 ... 1.50

WALT DISNEY'S UNCLE SCROOGE
Oct, 1986-No. 242, Apr, 1990 (Color)
No. 243, June, 1990-Present
Gladstone Publ./Disney Comics #243
380/Gladstone #281 on
210-r/1st Beagle Boys ... 25.00
211-218 ... 15.00
219-Son Of The Sun by Rosa 25.00
220-Don Rosa story ... 5.00
221-220, 224, 226, 227-Rosa c 3.00
231 240 235-Rosa story/art ... 3.00
241, 242-(1.95, 68 pgs.) ... 3.00
243 249, 251-256 (1.50) 243-r/
WDCS #98 ... 2.25
250 (2.25, 52 pgs.)/Barks r ... 3.00
285-The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck
Pt 1, Rosa c/a/script ... 10.00
286-291 The Life and Times of Scrooge
McDuck Pt 2-7, Rosa c/a/script 5.00
292 301 301 r/Barks ... 1.50

WALT DISNEY'S UNCLE SCROOGE ADVENTURES (Uncle Scrooge Adventures #1-31
Nov, 1987-No. 31, May, 1990 (95¢, color)
No. 32, Sept, 1993-Present (1.50, color)
Gladstone Publ.
1 ... 8.00
2-5, 5-Rosa c/a ... 4.00
6-19, 9, 14-Rosa art ... 3.00
20, 21-11 90, 20-Rosa c/a ... 2.50
22 (1.50), Rosa cover, r/US #26 ... 5.00
23 (2.95, 68 pgs.)/Vs. Phantom Blot,
Barks r ... 4.00
24-28, 29, 31, 32, 34 36, 24, 25,
29 31, 32-Rosa c, 25-r/US #21 ... 2.00
27-Guardians of the Lost Library;
Rosa c/a/story, origin of the Junior
Woodchuck Guidebook ... 3.00
28 (2.95, 68 pgs)/r/US #13 w/restored
missing panels, Rosa c ... 4.00
30 (2.95, 68 pgs)/r/US #12, Rosa c,
Barks r ... 4.00
33 (2.95, 64 pg.) new Barks r/p. ... 3.00
37-42 41-begin 1.50-c ... 1.50

WAITER(see THE MASK)

WALLY (Ms. Fury #6, May, 1995
(2.50, color, limited series)
Dark Horse Comics
1-4-Mark character ... 2.50

WANDERING STAR
1993-Present (2.50/2.95, B&W)
Arn & Iris Comics/Sonas Entertainment
1 (9.12.50) Iris S. Woods/a & w all ... 3.00
10-11 10-begin 2.75 c ... 2.50
12-16 12-(1/94, 2.50) 1st Sonus issue
... 2.50
19S-(11 95)/1.7 ... 2.50

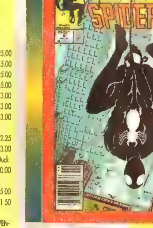
WANTED, THE WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS VILLAINS
July-Aug, 1972-No. 9, Aug-Sept, 1973
(All 52¢ issues)
DC Comics (All reprints)
1-Batman c/story, Green Lantern r/GL 1 #1
... 6.50
2-Batman/Joker/Penguin-c/
story reprinted from Batman #25 8.00
3-9- All GA reprints ... 4.00

WARBLADE: ENDANGERED SPECIES
Jan, 1995-No. 4, Apr, 1995
(2.50, color, limited series)
Image Comics/Wildstorm Productions
1-4, 1-Gatefold wrap cover/a-c ... 2.50

WARLOCK (Special Edition on cover)
Dec, 1982-No. 6, June, 1983 (2.00, Direct)
Marvel Comics Group
1-6 Pearson/Sh Tales 178-181, Warlock
9-15, Marv Team-up 55, Avengers Ann. 7
Marv 2-in-1 Ann. 2 ... 5.00
Special Edition #1 (12/83) ... 2.25

WARLOCK
May, 1992-No. 6, Oct, 1992
(2.50, color, mini-series)
Marvel Comics
V2#1-6-r/Warlock Special Edition series
... 2.50

WARLOCK AND THE INFINITY WATCH
Feb, 1992-No. 42, July 1995
(1.75/1.95 color)
Marvel Comics
1, 2-1 Starlin cover/a-bag 1 Austin c/a(i) in
1-4, 7 sequel to Infinity Gauntlet, brief
origin recap Warlock 2 retells
Moondragon ... 2.00



Web of Spider-Man #8

WARCHILD
Jan, 1995-No. 4, Aug, 1995 (2.50, color)
Maximum Press
1 -with b/c's ... 3.00
2-4 ... 2.50
1-3-variant c ... 3.00

WARLOCK (The Power Of)
(See Fantastic Four Ann. #7,
Incredible Hulk #178, Infinity War,
Marvel Premiere, Silver Surfer #44, Strange
Tales, Thor 165) Aug, 1973-No. 8, Oct,
1975, No. 9, Oct, 1993-No. 15, Nov,
1994
Marvel Comics Group
1-Origin retold by Rane ... 25.00
2, 3 ... 10.00
4-8: 4-Death of Eddie Roberts ... 7.50
9-Jim Thomas saga begins;
Thanos cameo, Starlin c/a-i in #9-15
... 9.00
10-Origin recap Thanos & Gamora,
Thanos c/story, Thanos vs. Magus-c/
story ... 20.00
11-Thanos app., Warlock dies ... 15.00
12-14: Saga cont. 14-last 25¢ issue. 10.00
15-Thanos c/story ... 15.00

WARLOCK (Special Edition on cover)
Dec, 1982-No. 6, June, 1983 (2.00, Direct)
Marvel Comics Group
1-6 Pearson/Sh Tales 178-181, Warlock
9-15, Marv Team-up 55, Avengers Ann. 7
Marv 2-in-1 Ann. 2 ... 5.00
Special Edition #1 (12/83) ... 2.25

WARLOCK
May, 1992-No. 6, Oct, 1992
(2.50, color, mini-series)
Marvel Comics
V2#1-6-r/Warlock Special Edition series
... 2.50

WARLOCK AND THE INFINITY WATCH
Feb, 1992-No. 42, July 1995
(1.75/1.95 color)
Marvel Comics
1, 2-1 Starlin cover/a-bag 1 Austin c/a(i) in
1-4, 7 sequel to Infinity Gauntlet, brief
origin recap Warlock 2 retells
Moondragon ... 2.00

WARLORD
Dec, 1976-No. 126, Feb, 1989
Warren Publishing
1-Origin Warlord; Frazetta c/Severin a
2-Frazetta c/Severin a
3-Frazetta c/Severin a
4-Frazetta c/Severin a
5-Frazetta c/Severin a
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123-Frazetta c/Severin a
124-Frazetta c/Severin a
125-Frazetta c/Severin a
126-Frazetta c/Severin a

WARRIOR
May, 1996-Present (2.95, color)
Ultimate Creations
1,2-Warrior/a/Callahan c/a ... 3.00
1-variant c ... 7.00

WARRIOR NUN AREALA (Adventure Presents)
Dec, 1996-No. 3, May, 1995 (2.95, color)
1-Special Ed. (5,000) ... 10.00
1 ... 6.00
2-3 ... 5.00
3-bagged w/CD ... 6.00
...PORTRAITS
Mar, 1996 (3.95, color, one-shot)
1-pin-ups ... 4.00
...RITUALS
July, 1995-No. 6, June, 1996 (2.95, color)
1-5 ... 3.00
6-(1.50) ... 3.50
...SCORING ROSE
Sept, 1996-Present
(2.95, color, limited series)
1 ... 3.00
...VS. RAZOR (see RAZOR)
May, 1996 (2.95, color, one-shot)
1-Ow/a/c/a ... 4.00
1-(9.95) CD version, polybagged w/CD
... 10.00

TRIVIA
What is the
name of
Peter and
Mary Jane
Parker's
kidnapped
baby?

WARRIORS OF PLASM
Feb, 1991-No. 4, May, 1991
(2.50, color, limited series)
Defiant Comics
1-Origin recap Thanos & Gamora,
Thanos c/story, Thanos vs. Magus-c/
story ... 20.00
11-Thanos app., Warlock dies ... 15.00
12-14: Saga cont. 14-last 25¢ issue. 10.00
15-Thanos c/story ... 15.00

WARRIORS OF PLASM
Feb, 1991-No. 4, May, 1991
(2.50, color, limited series)
Defiant Comics
1-Origin recap Thanos & Gamora,
Thanos c/story, Thanos vs. Magus-c/
story ... 20.00
11-Thanos app., Warlock dies ... 15.00
12-14: Saga cont. 14-last 25¢ issue. 10.00
15-Thanos c/story ... 15.00

WARRIOR OF WAVERLY STREET, THE
Nov. 1996-Present
(2.95, color, limited series)
Dark Horse Comics
1-Darrow-c 3.00

WARRIORS
1993 (F, B&W, one-shot)
CFD Productions
1-Jenser, Dark Draco 25.00

WATCHMEN
Sept. 1986-Mar. 12, Oct. 1987 (mini-series)
DC Comics
1-12 ..... 4.00
Nostalgia Collection, slip-cased (Graphitti Designs); nn/1-12 w/new material ..50.00

WEAPON X
Mar. 1995-No. 4, June, 1995
($1.50, color)
Marvel Comics
1-Age of Apocalypse 6.00
2-4 ..... 4.00

WEAPON ZERO
(Image Comics/Top Cow Productions)
June, 1995-No. 4, Oct, 1995 ($2.50, color)
0-w/Gnanovan x-cpt 3.00
...VOLUME II
Mar. 1995-Present (2.50, color)
1-B-Simonson-r; B-Top Cow issue 2.50

WAR OF SCARLET SPIDER
Oct, 1995-No. 4, Jan, 1996 (1.95, color)
Marvel Comics
1-4-replaces "Web of Spider-Man" ..2.00

WEB OF SPIDER-MAN
Apr, 1985-No. 129 Sept. 1995
Marvel Comics Group
1-5#-app. black costume 40.00
2, 3 ..... 12.00
4 B: 7 hulk x-over 9.00
9 12: 10-Portacio-c 8.00
14 28: 18 (9/86)-1st app. Venom
(before the scenes, not shown)
19-Intro Hinkley & Solo 5.00
29-New Hobgoblin (Macendale),
Wolverine app. 15.00
30-Origin recap Rose & Hobgoblin (needs
1) 15.00
31, 32-Six part Kraven storyline begins
..... 10.00
33 37, 39-47, 49 ..... 3.00
38-Hobgoblin app. 7.00
48-Origin & 1st full app. of Venom
Hobgoblin(Macendale) cont'd from
Spect. Spider-Man #147 ..... 25.00
50-51, 52, 53 ..... 2.50
51-58 ..... 2.00
59-Comic Spidey cont. from Sp.
Spider-Man 10.00
60-65, 68-85, 87-89, 91-94, 84-
Begin 6 part Rose B.
Hobgoblin-1 story #3, 9-Hobgoblin
(Macendale) reborn/-4/ 2.00
66, 67, 86, 66-67-Green Goblin app.
as a superhero, 86-Venom leaves
Hobgoblin; 1st Demogoblin 3.00
90-(2.95, 52 pgs.)-Silver hologram-c,
polybagged w/poster 5.00
90-2nd print; gold hologram-c 3.00
95-Begin 4-part x-over w/Spirits of Vengeance 3.00
96-99, 101-106: 104-106-Nightwatch
back-ups 2.00
100-(2.95, 52 pgs.)-Holo-grafix foil-c, mini
new Spider-Armor 3.25
107-111, 107-Intro Sandskorn,

Sand & Quicksand app. 1.25
112-116, 118, 119, 121-124, 126-129: 112-
Begin 4 30¢; bound in trading card
sheet. 113-Gamiol app. 118-1st solo
clone, Venom app. 119-Intro Kaine, -
Scarlet Spector, Venom app. 127-Max
Carnage pt. 2. 129-card insert 1.50
113-(2.95)-Collector's Ed. polybagged
w/foil-c, 16 pg. preview of S-H-E cartoon
& animation cal 3.00
117-(1.50) Flip book, Power &
Responsibility pt 1 ..... 1.50
117 (2.95)-Collectors edition, flip-c,
flip book 3.00
119-(-6.50)-Grow-ed. polybagged
w/Marvel Milestone Annex. S-H #150 &
coupon for Annex. S-H #396, S-H
#53 & Spect. S-H #219 ..... 6.50
120-(2.25)-Flip book w/preview of The
Ultimate Spider-Man 2.25
125-(3.95)-Holodeck-c Gwen Stacy clone
..... 4.00
125-(2.95)-Newsstand 3.00
Super Special ('95, 3.95) 1-Ryp back
..... 4.00
Annual 1-('85) 3.00
Annual 2-('86) Arthur Adams-c 6.00
Annual 3-('87) 3.00
Annual 4-('88)-Evolutionary War 3.00
Annual 5-('89', 2.00)-Atlantis Attacks ..2.75
Annual 6-('90, 2.00)-Punisher backup story
..... 2.75
Annual 7 ('91, 2.00)
Origin recap of Hobgoblin I & II, Green
Goblin. 8, 9, Venom, Lizard/Austin c/2.75
Annual 8-('92, 2.25)-Venom story, pt. 3
..... 2.25
Annuals 9-('93, 2.95)-Polybagged w/card
..... 3.25
Annual 10 ('94, 2.95, 68 pgs.) 3.00

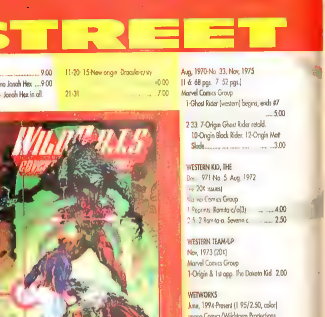
WEBZILLA
Aug, 1996-Present (2.75/3.00, B&W)
Lightning Comics
1 (12.95) 2.75
1b-(3.00) 3.00
1-(9.95)-Commemorative Ed. ..10.00

WEB OF MYSTERY TALES
Elsie DC 100 Page Super
Spectacular #4]
July-Aug. 1972-No. 26, Nov. 1975
National Periodical Publications
1-Kirby-c, Wrightson splash pg. 8.00
2-24: 4-Sutton-c 24-Wrightson-c ..3.00

WEBO WAR TALES
Sept-Oct. 1971-No. 124, June, 1983
National Periodical Publications/DC Comics
1-Kubert-a in 1, 4, 7; c-1 ..... 10.00
2, 3-Drucker-a 2-Grandenetti-a. 3-
Schaffenberger-a 6.00
4-7, 9, 10, 5, 6, 10-Toth-a 4.00
8-Neal Adams-c/a] 7.00
11, 50, 51-Grandenetti & Kubert-c/a] ..3.00
12-40, 65-67, 69-124: 89
Intro/origin Creature Commandos.
101 Intro/origin G.I. Robot 1.75
66, 68-Frank Miller-c 2.50

WEIRD WESTERN TALES (see JONAH HEX)
No. 12, June-July, 1972-No. 70, Aug, 1980
(Formerly All-Star Western)
National Periodical Publications
12-(52 pgs.) 2nd app. Jonah Hex;
1st Lash & Pow Wow Smith-s, El Diablo
by Neal Adams/Wrightson 25.00
13-28 rpts. Jonah Hex, Neal Adams-c
..... 15.00
14, 29: 14-Toth-a, 29-Origin Jonah Hex.

15-Neal Adams-c/a; no Jonah Hex ..9.00
16, 17, 19-20, 30-36: Jonah Hex in all
..... 6.00
11-20: 15-New origin Dracula story
..... 10.00
21-31 ..... 7.00



38-last Jonah Hex 4.00
1B-1st full Jonah Hex issue (7-8/73) &
begins 8.00
39-70: 39-Origin/1st app. Scalphunter &
begins 3.00

WEIRD WONDER TALES
Dec. 1973-No. 22, May, 1977
Marvel Comics Group
1-Wrightson-c/Mystic #6 (Eye of Doom)
..... 4.00
2-22: 19 22-Dr. Droid (Dronette) 2.50

WEIRD WORLDS
Aug-Sept. 1972-No. 9, Jan-Feb, 1974, No.
10, Oct-Nov, 1974
National Periodical Publications
1-Intro Carter, Warlord of Mars & Deed
Jones begin (1st DC app.), Kubert-c
[#1 10 cent 52 cent] 6.00
2-7-7-last John Carter 3.00
8-10: 8-Ivan Wolf begins (1st app.)
by Chaykin 1.75

WEREWOLF
(Also see Dracula & Frankenstein)
Dec, 1966-No. 3, Apr, 1967
Dell Publishing Co.
1-1st app. Jason Bard 8.00
2, 3 ..... 5.00

WEREWOLF BY NIGHT
(Also see Giant Size)
Sept, 1972-No. 42, Mar, 1977
Marvel Comics Group
1-Plaque-cont'd/Marvel Spotlight #4
..... 45.00
2 ..... 25.00
3-5 ..... 15.00
6-10 ..... 12.00

22-Origin/1st app. Moon Knight ($75)
..... 55.00
33-2nd app. Moon Knight 12.00
34-36, 38-43 ..... 4.00
37-Moon Knight cameo 8.00

WEST COAST AVENGERS
Sept, 1984-No. 4, Dec, 1984 (Mini-series)
Marvel Comics Group
1 ..... 2.00
2-4 ..... 1.50

WEST COAST AVENGERS
(Avengers West Coast #48 on)
Oct, 1985-No. 102 Jan, 1996
(Regular series)
Marvel Comics Group
V2#1-20 ..... 1.50
21-41 ..... 1.00
42-John Byrne-c/scripts begin, ends #59
..... 2.00
42-49: 48-becomes Avengers West Coast
..... 1.00
50-Re-intro original Human Torch ..1.50
51-74, 76-99 87/88-Wolverine-c/by 1.25
75-(1.50, 52 pgs.)-F. Four x-over 1.50
100 (3.95, 68 pgs.)-Red foil embossed-c,
death of Mockingbird 4.00
101, 102: 101-X-Men x-over 1.25
Annual 1 ('86) 2.00
Annual 2 ('87, 1.25) 2.00
Annual 3 ('88)-Evolutionary War 2.75
Annual 4 ('89, 2.00)-Atlantis Attacks ..2.50
Annual 5 ('90, 2.00)- Annual ii- ('91, 2.00)
..... 2.00
Annual 7 ('92, 2.25)-Darkhawk app. 2.25
Annual 8 ('93, 2.95) Polybagged w/card
..... 3.00

WESTERN GUNFIGHTERS

Aug, 1970-No. 33, Nov, 1975
(1 & 68 pgs. 7 52 pgs.)
Marvel Comics Group
1-Ghost Rider (western) begins, ends #7
..... 5.00
2-33: 7-Origin Ghost Rider retold.
10-Origin Black Rider. 12-Origin Mett
Slade 3.00

WESTERN KID, THE
Dec. 1971-No. 5 Aug. 1972
(52 pgs.)
Atlas/Seaboard Comics Group
1-Ayers(-r); Ramita-c/a(3) 4.00
2, 3, 5-Ayers-a. Severin-c 2.50

WESTERN TEAM-UP
Nov, 1973 (.20¢)
Marvel Comics Group
1-Origin & 1st app. The Durango Kid 2.00

WESTWORKS
June, 1994-Present (1.95/2.50, color)
Image Comics/Wildstorm Productions
1 "Jolly" arc, Grateful wraparound-c,
Portacio/Williams/a & 5.00
1-Chicago Comicon Ed. 10.00
2-4 ..... 3.00
2-Alternate Portacio-c see Deathblow #5
..... 15.00
5 (2.50) 6-7, 9 22 13 Portacio-c
16-"Tits From Heaven" pt 4. 17-"Tits
From Heaven" pt 11 ..... 2.50
8 (1.95)-Newsstand, WildStorm Rising pt 7
..... 2.00
8 (2.50) Direct Market, WildStorm Rising pt
7 ..... 2.50
Sourcebook 1 (10/94, 2.50)-Text &
Rare-no comics 2.50

WHAM-O GIANT COMICS
Apr, 1967
(Newspaper size, 98¢, one-shot, full color)
Wham-O Mfg. Co
1-Rankin & Gaudy-Bumbles by Wally Wood
..... 45.00

WHAT IF?
Feb, 1977-No. 47, Oct, 1984
Marvel Comics Group (All are 52 pgs.)
1-Brief origin Spider-Man, FF 20.00
2-Origin Hulk retold 12.00
3-Origin Ka-zar retold 8.00
4-10: 8-0. Stevens-pi/-in backup *
Man Spider* 7.00
11-20 ..... 5.00
13-Comm. Buscema-c/a 7.00
14-16 ..... 4.50
17-Ghost Rider & Son Of Satan app. ..8.00
18, 19-Silver Surfer-c 6.00
20-Spider-Man '22-Origin Dr.
Doom retold 4.00
27, 28, 37-X-Men app., Miller-c, 28-
DD by Miller, Ghost Rider app. 10.00
30-**What If... Spider-Man's Clone Had
Lived!*** 10.00
31-Begin 1.00-c; X-Men app. Wolverine
app. 15.00
32-47: 37-Child X-Men & Silver Surfer app.
..... 3.00
Special (6/88, 1.50, color) 2.00

WHAT IF...? (2nd Series)
July, 1989-Present (1.25/1.50, color)
Marvel Comics
V2#1-Evolutionary War 4.00
2-5: 2-D.D. Punisher app. 2.25

6-X-Men 4.00
7-Wolverine app., Lumiki's (dpt) 5.00
8, 11, 11 Mutations-c(1) 2.25
9, 12, X-Men 3.00
10-Punisher app. 3.00
13-15, 17 21, 22, 27-29: 13-Thor X app., Jim Lee-c. 15-Cayuka/c-fx. 22-X-Men 1.50
16-Comes bathes Wolverine 4.50
22-Silver Surfer by Lim/Austin-c/a 3.00
24-Wolverine, Punisher app. 2.25
25-(1.50, 52 pgs.) Wolverine app. 3.00
26-Punisher app. 2.00
29-(1.75, 52 pgs.) 1.75
31-alt. Cosmic Spidey & Venom app. 4.00
32-Wolverine 1.50
41-(1.75, 52 pgs.)-Avengers vs Galactus 1.75
42-alt. 51-(1.50) Wolverine, 44 Venom/Punisher 45-Ghost Rider, 46-Cable story, 47-Magneto, 49-Silver Surfer/Thanos, 52-Dr. Doom, 54-Death's Head, 58-Punisher 50-Wolverine 60-X-Men Maddog Allen 1.25
50-(2.95, 52 pgs.)-Foil embossed-c; "What if Hulk Had Killed Wolverine" 3.00
61-92, 61 begin 1-50-c; bound in card sheet. Spider-Man 74-X-Men. 76-Ital Watcher in life. 77, 81-X-Men. 78-Riley-c. 80-Hulk. 83-Daredevil. Dr. Strange, Elektra. 84, 85-X-Men. 86-Spider-Man. 87-Sabretooth. 88-Spider-Man. 89-Fantastic Four. 90-Cyclops & Havok. 91-The Hulk 1.50
WHEELIE AND THE CHOPPER BUNCH (TV)
July, 1975-Feb. 7, July, 1976 (Hanna-Barbera)
Charlton Comics
1, 2-Flyme lost Bike (easily-r) 8.00
3-7-Skate-o, 3-Flyme-c & last Bike 4.25

WHERE CREATURES ROAM
July, 1970-No. 8, Sept. 1971 (Pre-hero reprints in all)
Marvel Comics Group
1-Kirby/Ayers-c. Orbo-1,2,4,6,7 ..... 5.00
2-8-Kirby-c 3.00

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS CARMEN SANDIEGO?(TV)
June, 1991-Present (1.75, color)
DC Comics
1-4-adaptation of TV show 1.75

WHERE MONSTERS DWELL
Jan., 1970-No. 38, Oct, 1975 (Pre-hero reprints in all)
Marvel Comics Group
1-Kirby/Ditko 5.00
2-10, 12, 4-Crandall-c. 12-Giant size 3.00
11, 13-37, 18, 20-Starlin-c 2.50
38-Williamson-r/World of Suspense #3 ..... 3.00

WHERE'S HUDDLES? (TV) (See Fun-In #7)
Jan., 1971-No. 3, Dec, 1971 (Hanna-Barbera)
Gold Key
1 ..... 10.00
2, 3. 3-Benjamin most of #1 ..... 6.00

WHOA, NELLIE
(also see Giffi, CRAZY & LOVE AND ROCKETS)
July, 1995-No. 3, Sept. 1996 (2.95, B&W, limited series)
Fantagraphics Books
1-3-Jaime Hernandez-c/a 3.00

WHO'S WHO IN STAR TREK(see STAR TREK)
Nov., 1969-May 2, Apr. 1987 (1.50 color) DC Comics
1,2 ..... 3.00

WILDC.A.T.S ADVENTURES
Sept. 1994-No. 6, Jan. 1995 (1.95, color) Image Comics/Wildcats Productions
1 ..... 2.00
1-Gold edition 2-Sept. 1994 ..... 6.00
Sourcebook 1 (1.95, 2/96) 3.00

WILDC.A.T.S: COVERT ACTION TEAMS
Aug, 1992-No. 4, Mar, 1993, No. 5, Nov, 1993-Present (1.95/2.50, color)
Image Comics/Wildstorm Productions
1-1st app., Jim Lee-c/a-r; all; contains 2 trading cards (2 versions exist, each with a different card) 6.00
1-Gold gold foil, signed 60.00
1-Gold gold foil, unsigned 15.00
1-Newsstand ed., w/o cards 3.00
2-(2.50)-Prism foil stamped-c; direct sales only; contains coupon for Image Comics #0; 1st app. Wetworks by Portacio
3-(6 pg. preview) 4.00
2-With coupon missing 1.00
2-Direct Sale misprint w/no prism on c 5.00
2-Newsstand copy, no cards or prism c 3.00
3,4-(2.50) 3-1st/Estella-c. 4 Pohlmeyer w/Topps card, 1st app. Tribe by Stroman, Youngblood cameo 6.00
4-variant w/Red Card 8.00
5-7 (1.95) (note: #6-Gold; #7 Silver edition) 5.00
8-12 (2.50). 8-Cameos of 3-Men's Jam Grey & Scott Summers 4.00
11-Alternate Portacio-c, see Deathblow #5 ..... 15.00
12-19, 21-24, 26-33 13 Jim Lee/Scott Williams-c; C.Cannon-c/part-a 14-Iverson-a/a 16-1 Charmin-c/p/pen-up 21-began Alan Moore-a. 29-Fire From Heaven-pt 7. 30-Fire From Heaven-pt 13. 31-use-a/a 2.00
20-(2.50)-Direct Market, WildStorm Rising Part 2-bound-in card 2.50
20-(1.95)-Newsstand, WildStorm Rising Part 2 ..... 2.50
25-(4.95) wrap-around foil-c; Alan Moore-s 5.50
WildC.A.T.s Sourcebook 1 (9/93, 2.50)-Foil embossed-c(note: Gold ed.) 2.50
WildC.A.T.s Sourcebook 2 (11/94, 2.50)-Wraparound-c 2.50
Compendium (6/93, 9.95)-Polybagged w/Foil w/Visa #0 ..... 10.00
Special 1 (11/93, 2.50, 52 pgs.)-Travis Charest/Williams-c/a & pen-up 3.50

WILDC.A.T.S TRILOGY
June, 1993-No. 3, Dec, 1993 (1.95, color, mini-series) Image Comics/Wildstorm Productions
1 (2.50)-Multi-color foil-c. Jae Lee-c/a 2.50
1 (1.95)-Newsstand ed., w/o Jae c 2.00
2, 3-Jae Lee-c/a 2.00

WILDSTAR (Image Comics)
...SKY ZERO
Mar, 1995-No. 4, Nov, 1993 (1.95, color, mini series) (2.50)-Embossed-w/silver ink 2.50
1-Gold variant 5.00
1-Newsstand ed. w/silver ink-c, not embossed 2.00
2-4. Delivery-c/a in all 2.00

...VOLUME 2
Image Comics/HighArrow Entertainment
Sept, 1995-Present (2.50, color)
1-3 ..... 2.50

WILDSTORM (Image Comics/Wildstorm Productions)
1996/1995 (2.95/4.95, color)
Chamber of Horrors (10/95, 2.50)
Bailey-r 3.50
...Burkins 1 (11/94, 4.95, 52 pgs)-r/1st Gen 13 ..... 8.00
...Swimsuit Special 1 (12/94, 2.95) 4.00
Swimsuit Special 2 (95, 2.50) 3.00
Universe Sourcebook (5/95, 2.50)...2.50
...95/95, 2.50, limited series) 1-4-varts, by various 2.50

WILDSTORM SWIMSUIT SPECIAL
May, 1995 (1.95/2.50, color)
Image Comics/Wildstorm Productions
0 (10.00) "Nude" Ed 10.00
1-(5.95) Nude Ed 6.00

WISE SON: THE WHITE WOLF
Nov, 1996-Present (2.50, color)
DC Comics/Milestone
1,2-r/Tie Ole Anderson-s/c/a 2.50

WITCHBLADE
(Image Comics/Top Cow Productions)
Nov, 1995-Present (2.50, color)
Image Comics/Top Cow Productions
1/2 Variant 17.00
1-Turner-a(p) in all 15.00
2 ..... 12.00
3-5 ..... 8.00
6-10: 8-wrap around-c. 9-Donnell-a(p). 10-Darkness #0 ..... 2.50
9-variant-c 5.00
10-Ennis-s 5.00
...COLLECTED EDITION
July, 1996-Present
64 pgs. color, limited series, square-bound) 5.00

WOLVERINE
(Also see Incredible Hulk #180, 181 & Kitty Pryde & ...)
Sept, 1982-No. 4, Dec, 1982 (Mini-series) Marvel Comics Group
1-Miller-c/a-i in all 35.00
2, 3. ..... 25.00
4 ..... 27.00
175 (7/87, 4.95)-71-4 ..... 8.00
176 (9/95) 2nd printing 10.00

WOLVERINE
(Also see Marvel Comics Presents)
Nov, 1988-Present (1.50/1.75/1.95, color) Marvel Comics
1-Buscema-a begins, ends 16 ..... 20.00
2 ..... 17.00
3-5 ..... 14.00
6-9: 7, 8-Hulk app. 12.00
10-Before dawn, the battle w/Sabretooth 30.00
11-16 11 New Costume 8.00
17-20: 17-Byrne-c/a begins, ends #23 ..... 5.00
21-30: 24, 25, 27-Jim Lee-c 4.00
31-40, 44, 47: 36-Jigsaw app. 3.00
41-Sabretooth claims to be Wolverine's father; Cable cameo 6.00
42-43-Cable and Wolverine 4.00
45-Sabretooth & Cable app., Sabretooth proves not to be Wolverine's father 5.00
46-Gold ink 2nd printing (1.75-c) 2.00
48-Sabretooth/Wolverine saga concludes 5.00
49, 50-Sabretooth-r/story 4.00
48, 49-Sabretooth app., Weapon X sequel 3.00
50-(2.50, 64 pgs.)-Die-cut-c; Weapon X sequel concludes, Wolverine back to yellow costume 5.00
51-74, 76-80: 51-Sabretooth-r/app. 5.00
55-57-73-Gambit 5.00
...pg., 57-Death of Merlin, 60-64 Sabretooth storyline 3.00
75-(3.95, 68 pgs.)-Wolverine hologram c/s 7.00
81-84, 86 81-Begin 1-95-c bound-in card sheet 3.00
85-(2.50)-Newsstand edition 3.00
85-(3.50)-Collectors edition 5.00
87-90-(1.95)-Deluxe edition 2.50
87-90-(1.50)-Standard edition 2.50
91-99, 101-109: 91-Return from "Age of Apocalypse", 93-Juggernaut app. 94-Gen X app. 99-Cannibal app. 101-106-Elektra app. 104-origin of Onslaught 105-"Onslaught" 2.00
100-(2.95)-Hologram-c, Wolverine kisses Jubilee 4.00

Wonder Woman #114

1-(2.50)-Direct Market, WildStorm Rising Part 1; bound-in card 2.75
1-(1.95)-Newsstand, WildStorm Rising Part 1 ..... 2.25
2-(2.50)-Direct Market, WildStorm Rising Part 10; bound-in card 2.75
2-(1.95)-Newsstand, WildStorm Rising Part 10 ..... 2.25
1998-(19.95) B&W-c 20.00

WILD WEST SHOWN, THE
1996 (5.95, B&W, 398, one-shot) Mojo Press
re-Western stories by various inc. Lumiki 6.00

WILD WILD WEST, THE (TV)
June, 1966-No. 7, Oct, 1969 Gold Key
1 Mc Williams-a 115.00
2 ..... 82.00
3-7 ..... 65.00

WILLOW
June, 1966-Present (2.95, B&W) Angel Entertainment
0, 1 ..... 3.00
0-(5.95) "Black Magic" foil-c 6.00
1-4. 1-(1/3, 2-(2/3, 3-(3/3, 4-(4/3 ..... 2.50
...Slipcase (10.95) 11.00

WITCHCRAFT
June, 1994-No. 3, Aug, 1994 (2.95, color, limited series) DC Comics/Vertigo
1-3-Kaluta-c/Robinson s 5.00
1-Platinum edition 30.00
1?8-(14.95) 1/1-3 new Kaluta-c 15.00

WITCHING HOUR
(Continued with The Unexpected with #185)
Feb-Mar, 1969-No. 85, Oct, 1978
National Periodical Publications/ DC Comics
1-Bell-a-Three Witches 24.00
2, 4, 6-Toth-c 12.00
3, 5-Wrightson-c. 3-Levi 12# issue 9.00
4, 7, 9-12 ..... 7.00
8-Toth, Heck Adams-c 8.00
13, 14. 13-Neal Adams-c/a (2 pgs.) 14-Williamson/Gaszon, Jones-a 3.00
15-20 ..... 2.00
21-85: 28-1100 pgs.) 2.00

TRIVIA
What code-name was Logan given before Wolverine?

OVERSTREET

Runaways 8.00
100-(2/92) Regular c 5.00
Asexual (m) (R), 1989. 4.50-The Jungle Adventure 4.50
Asexual 2 (12/90, 4.95) Bloodlust 5.00
'96 (2.95) wrap-around c; Silver Samuel, Swallow, Valve, and Red Rosin app. 3.00
Asexual no. 3(6/91, 5.95)-Mother Of Tears; Cable & Warren meet; 2nd print exists 6.00
Battles the Incredible Hulk nn (1989, 4.95), 52 pgs.)-Reprints Incredible Hulk #180 & 181 ..... 5.00
Blood Hungry (93), 6.95, 68 pgs.) Keith vs. Wolverine stories from Marvel Comics Presents 85-92 ..... 7.00
Bloody Chelsea nn (1992, 7.95) 8.00
...Evolution nn (9/94, 5.95, graphic novel) 6.00
Global Jeopardy 1 (12/90, 2.95)-Embassador, Solo Warrior, Zebra, Ka-Zar, Shanna & Wolverine, produced in cooperation w/World Wildlife Fund 3.00
Inner Fury nn (11/92, 5.95)-Metallic inks 6.00
"93 nn (93, 3.95) 4.00
Save The Tiger 1 (2/92, 2.95)-Kwitny; Wolverine stories from Marvel Comics Presents #1-7 ..... 3.00
Triumphs and Tragedies (93, 16.95), 192p) -Uncanny X-Men #109, 172, 173, Wolverine #1, Iceman #4, Wolverine #41, #275 ..... 17.00
Typhoid's Kiss (6/94, 4.95)-Wolverine stories from Marvel Comics Presents #109-114 ..... 7.00

WOLVERINE (Marvel Comics) **...AND THE PUNISHER: DAMAGING EVIDENCE**
Oct. 1993 No. 3, 1993 (2.00, cover, scene, variant) 1-3: 2, 3-Indicia says Punisher & Wolverine. 2.00

.../CAMAC VICTIMS
Sept. 1995 No. 4, 1995 (2.95, color, limited series) 1 4-Folk, Jeph Loeb-Sienkiewicz art 3.00
... KNIGHT OF TESSLA
1995 (6.95, color, one-shot) w/Coltrane 7.00
...SAGA, THE
Sept. 1989-No. 4, Dec. 1989 (2.95, color, deluxe, mini series) 1-Beginnings; Liefeld/Andrew 5.00
2-4 ..... 4.00
...VS. SPIDERMAN
May, 1995 (2.50, color, one shot) 1-w/Marvel Comics Presents # 48-50 ..... 2.50

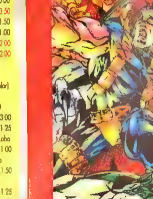
WOMBAT WOMAN
No. 23, Apr, 1955-No. 329, Jan, 1986 Harvey/Atlas/Marvel/Ballantine/DC Comics 73-99: 73-1st code approved issue. 120.00
91-94, 96, 97, 99 ..... 85.00
95-Atom Bomb cover 90.00
98-New origin & new art team (Andru & Esposito) begin (5/58) 95.00
100 (8/58) 105.00
101-104, 106-110 ..... 75.00
105-Secret origin, scarce (4/59) 400.00
111-50 ..... 55.00
121-126, 126 last 10¢ issue 40.00
127-130 ..... 35.00
131-150, 132 flying saucers 30.00
151, 158, 160-170, 175-(2/66) 25.00
159-Origin retold (1/66), 1st S.A. origin? 35.00
171-178 ..... 10.00
179-197, 199-Wood inks 6.00
196-198 (52 pgs.) Kiraniits 6.00
199, 200 Jeff Jones c, 200-(6/67?) 5.00
201-210, 201, 202 Colan/Infantino pgs. 2.00
211-230, 233-266, 269, 280, 284-286 ..... 1.50
231, 232-FSA guest star 2.00
267, 268-Re-intro Atomet Man (1986) 10.00

301-303 Joker-c/story 3.50
287-New Teen Titans app. 1.50
288-291, 301-328 ..... 1.00
300-(1.50, 78 pgs.)-JLA app. 2.00
329-Double size last issue. 2.00

WONDER WOMAN
Feb, 1987 Present (1.25/1.50/1.75, color) DC Comics
1-Perez-c/a begins, covers only #225-60 ..... 3.00
2-20 ..... 1.25
21-49, 51-62, 64-Last Perez c- 60's. 1.00
50-(1.50, 52 pgs.)-New Titans, JLA app. 3.50
63-81: 63-New Director & Ballard c-begin 1.25
82-86: 82-begin 1.50-c 2.00
85-1st deadpool-c 10.00
86-87 ..... 4.00
88-93: 88-Superman-c & app. 90-1st Artemis 5.00
0, 94-98 (9/10/94), 99-(1/95) 1.75
90-Hawkman app. 99-Eclipse-c 2.00
98, 99: 98-Begin Lopez run 1.75
100-(2.95)-Newsstand, Death of Artemis 3.00
100-(3.95)-Direct Market, foil-c, Death of Artemis 4.00
101-116: 101 John Byrne-c/a begins, begin 1.95-c, 105, 106-Jason Blood, Phantom Stranger app. 2.00
107-Doom-Legion of Monsters app. 110-Doomsday app. Post-Jaxon 2.00
111-1st app. new Wonder Girl 2.00
112-Superman app. 113 Wonder Girl-c, Sugar & Spike cameo 2.00
Annual 1 ('88, 1.50) Art Adams-c 2.00
Annual 2 ('89, 2.00) 2.00
Annual 3 ('92, 2.50) Giveaway ed. 2.50
Annual 4 ('93, 2.50) Year One story 2.50
Annual 5 ('94, 2.95) "Legends of the Dead Earth" 3.00
Special 1 ('92, 1.75)-Conl'd in W. W. #63 ..... 2.00
Gallery ('96, 3.50) Ballard c; pin ups by various 3.50
...: THE CHALLENGE OF ARTEMIS ('96, 9.95) -(Pre 100, Deadline)-c/a 10.00

WORLDS COLLIDE
(see SUPERMAN & MILESTONE Mini-Series)
July, 1994 (2.50, color)
DC Comics
1-(2.50, 52 pgs.) 2.50
1-(2.95, 52 pgs.)-Hologram w/vinyl clings 4.00

WORLD'S FINEST COMICS
No. 71, July-Aug, 1954-No. 323, Jan, 1986 National Periodical Publ./DC Comics
71-Gaines/Superman/Batman begin as team; Superman & Batman exchange identities 730.00
72-(Scarce) 525.00
73-(Scarce) 340.00
74 ..... 400.00
75 ..... 365.00
76-80: 75 1st code approved (2-4/55) 265.00
81-90: 88-1st Joker/Luthor team-up 215.00
300-(1.25, 52 pgs.)-New Teen Titans, JLA app. 3.25



91-93, 95-99 ..... 145.00
94-Origin Superman/Batman team retold 475.00
100 (5/59) 265.00
101-110 ..... 195.00
111-121-120-Last 10¢ issue 85.00
122-128, 130-142 ..... 42.00
125-Aquaman begins (5/62) 50.00
129-Joker/Luthor team-up-c/story 55.00
143-150 ..... 32.00
151-155, 157-160 ..... 24.00
156-1st Bizarro Batman, Joker-c/by 87.00
161, 170-Green G-28 & G-40 ..... 25.00
162-165, 167-169, 171-174: 169-(9/67) 3rd app. new Batgirl (cover and 1 panel cameo) 17.00
166-Joker-c/story 20.00
175, 176-N. Adams c/a. Oct. 225, 226 ..... 17.00
177-Joker/Luthor team-up-c/story 17.00
178, 180-187 ..... 8.00
179, 188-Giant G-32 & G-64 ..... 15.00
189-198 ..... 6.00
197-Giant G-76 ..... 15.00
198, 199-1st Superman/Flash race; 1st Flash 100 & Superman 199 ..... 75.00
200-205: 204-Last 15¢ issue. 205-I'll Shrink Ya-sty by Fresentis; Tom Titans x-over 2.50
206-Giant G-88 ..... 8.00
207-248: 215-Retro Batman, Jr & Superman, Jr. 232-238 (100 pgs.) 2.00
249, 253-265-68 pgs.) 4.25
249-The Creeper by Ditko begins 6.00
250-270, 272-299, 301-323 ..... 2.25
271-Origin Superman/Batman team retold 2.50

WORLD'S FINEST
1990 (1.95, color, limited series)
DC Comics
1 3-Gibbons-c/Rucka-c/a, Superman & Batman team-up 4.00
TPB-(11/93)-r/1-3 ..... 20.00

X (see Comics' Greatest World & Dark Horse Comics #8)
1-(6/94)-Nn 25, Apr, 1996 (2.00, color) Dark Horse Comics
1-7: 3-Pit Bulls x-over 2.00
8-25: 8-(2.50)-Ghost-c & app. 18-Predator app. 18-22-Aliens: Fluorescent Special #2 (6/94, 1.00, 20 pgs.) 1.00
: One Shot to the Head (94, 2.50, 36 pgs)-Miller c 2.50

X-CALIBRE
Mar, 1995-No. 4, July, 1995 (1.95, color) Marvel Comics
1-Age of Apocalypse 5.00
2-4 ..... 4.00

X-FACTOR
(Also see Spider-Man and X-Factor)
Feb, 1986-Present
Marvel Comics Group
1-(1.25, 52 pgs.)-Cont'd from FF 286, Baby Nathan app. on 2 pgs. (Origin of other X-Men 201) 15.00
2-4 ..... 8.00
5-10 pgs. Apocalypse (1 pg. cameo) 15.00
6-1st full app. Apocalypse 25.00
7-10: 10-Sabretooth app. (11/86, 3 pgs.) cont'd in X-Men #212, 1st app. in X-Men comic 5.00
11, 20: 12-Baby Nathan app. in flashback 4.00
21-22 ..... 3.00
23-1st Archangel (cameo) 12.00
24-1st full app. Archangel 12.00
25, 26: Fall Of The Mutants nn #26-26 ..... 4.00
27-30 ..... 2.00
31-37, 39, 41-49: 35-Origin Cyclops 1.50
38-(1.50, 52 pgs.) 2.00
40-Liefeld-c/a (6/88), 1st of Marvel(1.50) 2.00
50-(1.50, 52 pgs.)-Liefeld/McFarlane-c 2.00
51-53 Sozomorph app. 52 Liefeld-c(p) 1.50
54-59: 54-Silvestri-c(p) 1.50
60-X-Traction Agenda; New Mutants app. 8.00
61-Gold 2nd print 2.00
62, 63-X-Traction Agenda; New Mutants app. 6.00
63-Portraits/Tributes-c/a begins 6.00
64-67, 69, 70: 65-68: Jim Lee c-plus 2.00
66, 67 Bolsy Nathan app. cont'd in #68 ..... 2.00
68 Baby Nathan is sent into future 5.00
70-New teens begins, Shanna-c/a begins 3.50
71-2nd printing (1.25-c) 2.50
72-74: 74-last 1.00-c 1.50
75-(1.75, 52 pgs.) 2.50
76-82, 77, 79-Nn Shanna-c 1.50
84-86-(1.50-c)-Holyhagged w/ card, Jae Lee-c #5, 86-Jae Lee-c 2.00
87-91, 93-99, 101, 87 92-Quesada-c/a 1.50
88 1st app. Bishop 1.50
92-(1.50, 68 pgs.) Wraparound-c w/Monet hologram, begin X-Men 30th Ann. issues; Quesada-c/a 7.00
92-2nd printing 3.50
100-(2.95, 52 pgs.)-Collectors Ed., embossed foil-c, death of Multiple Man 6.00
100-(1.75, 52 pgs.)-Newsstand Edition 2.00
102-105, 107-111 102-Begin 1.50-c based-in card sheet 1.50
106-(2.00)-Quesada-c/Liefeld-c 2.00
106-(2.95)-Collectors edition 3.00
108-124, 126-129: 108-begin 1.95-c 119-stars from "Age of Apocalypse" 115-cont'd in #116, 119-122-Sabretooth app. 123-Hound app. 124-w/"Onslaught Update", 126-Beast vs. Dark Beast; "Onslaught"; 128-w/card insert. 128-return of Multiple Man 2.00
125-(2.95) "Onslaught", Post app., return of Havok 3.00
Annual 1 ('10/86), 2 ('10/87) 2.50
Annual 3 ('88) Evolutionary War 2.50
Annual 4 ('89, 2.00) Atlantis Attacks 2.50
Annual 5 ('90, 2.00)-New Mutants x-over 2.50
Annual 6 ('91, 2.00)-New Warriors, X-Force app. 2.50
Annual 7 ('92, 2.25) 1st Quesada-c/a on X-Factor 2.25
Annual 8 ('93, 2.95) 3.00
Annual 9 ('94, 2.95)-Trading card 3.00
Annual 9 ('94, 2.95)-Austin-c(i) 3.00
...Prisoner Of Love ('90, 4.95) Skeleton scripts 5.00

X-FILES, THE
Jan., 1995 - Present (2.50, color) Topps Comics
0-(9/95) 4.00
0-"Scully" variant-c 6.00

KEY
HOT
GOLD

PRICE GUIDE

'X-Vision" variant c 8.00
1/2-"earthfall" 25.00
1-Adaptation of I.V. Shaw; Direct Market & Newsstand; Moran Kerry on all 45.00
2 ..... 35.00
3-4 ..... 14.00
5-10 ..... 5.00
11-22: 21-w/bound-in card 2.50
Annual 1-3 ('95) 4.00
ashcan giveaway w/Take Wars Galaxy Mag (8/89) 15.00
ashcan giveaway w/Hero Illustrated 20.00
...Comics Digest 1, 2-(3.50) 3.50
...Comics Digest 3-(3.95) 4.00
...Special Edition 1 (4.95) /1-3 ..... 5.00
...Special Edition 2 (4.95) /1-7 ..... 5.00
...Special Edition 3 (4.95) /1-9 ..... 5.00
1TB-(19.95) 20.00

X-FORCE (See New Mutants #100) Aug. 1991-Present (1 000/1,253/1 50, color) Marvel Comics
1-(1.50). 52 pgs.)-Polybagged with 1 of 5 Marvel Universe cards, Tatfoli-(4)-(7,9,11)(a), c-9 ..... 3.00
1-Wild Cable card 4.00
1-2nd printing; metallic ink-c; no bag or card 1.75
2,3: 2-Deadpool-c/story 2.00
4-Spider-Man x-over w/Spider-Man #16 ..... 3.00
5-10: 7, 9, 10-Weapon X apps.
8-1st app. Six Pack (becomes Wild Pack on CABLE-BOOK 8, MEDIA, #1) 2.50
11-15(1.95)-24, 26-28: 15-Cable bones; X-Force; Cyclops-c begins-ends #25, 26,27-Cyclops's dies 2.00
16-18 (1.50) Polybagged w/trading card 2.50
25-(3.50, 52 pgs.)-Wraparound-c; w/Cable hologram, Cable returns 6.00
34,37,39-43: 34-Regan 1.50-c; bound-in card sheet 2.00
35-(2.00)-Newsstand edition 2.50
38-(2.95)-Collector edition 5.00
40-43 (1.95) Collector edition 2.50
44-49, 51-60: 44-Return from "Age of Apocalypse" 45-Sabretooth app. 46-Onslaught. 49-Sabretooth Show app. 52-Slab app., Onslaught. 55-vs. S.H.I.E.L.D. 56- Deadpool app. 57-Sinister, X-Men c/app., "Onslaught. 58"-Onslaught" X-Men w/card insert; return of Longshot #0 ..... 2.00
50-(3.95) gatefold w/pop-around foil-c 5.00
50-(3.95) Limited w/poster-c 15.00
Annual 1 ('92, 2.25) No Variant-c/pc. 1st Capullino as X-Force 2.25
Annual 2 ('93, 2.95) Polybagged w/trading card, Xavier X-Treme 3.00
Annual 3 ('94, 2.95, 68 pgs.) 3.00
...And Spider-Man: Sabotage on (11/92, 6.95, 196 p/x. Face #3,4 & 5-#6 ..... 7.00
...and Cable 1995 (12/95, 3.95, color) 4.00

...YOUNGBLOOD (see YOUNGBLOOD/X-FORCE) Aug 1996 (4.95, color)
1-Retro 5.00

X-FORCE MEGAZINE
Nov, 1996 (2.95, color, one-shot) Marvel Comics
1-r; foldout 4.00

X-MAN
Mar, 1995-Present (1.95, color) Marvel Comics
1-Age of Apocalypse 6.00
1/2a, 1/2b 14.00
2-4 ..... 5.00
5-22: 5-7 Madelyne Pryor app. 10-Prof. X app. 12-vs. Excalibur. 13-Marauders, Cable app. 14-vs. Cable. Onslaught app., 15-17-vs. Holocaust. 17-w/"Onslaught Update" 18-X-Force app., Marauders app., "Onslaught" 19-"Onslaught" 20-Abomination-c/ app. 2.00

X-MEN (Uncanny X-Men, Nos. 142-present, see Great Sized Sept, 1963-Jan, 1981 Marvel Comics
1-Origin & 1st app. The X-Men (Cyclops, Angel, Beast, Iceman & Marvel Girl X-Men begin), 1st app. Magneto & Prof. X

	GD	FN	NM
	375.00	1125.00	4500.00

2-1st app. The Vanisher 1400.00
3-1st app. The Blob 550.00
4-1st app. Quicksilver, Scarlet Witch, 2nd app. Magneto 485.00
5-Magneto & Evil Mutants-c/story. 340.00
6-10: 6-Sub-Mariner app. 7-Magneto app. 9-Early Avengers x-over. 10-1st S.A. app. Ka-Zar 250.00
11, 13-15: 15-Origin Beast 200.00
12-Origin Professor X, origin & 1st app. Juggernaut 375.00
16-20: 19-1st Mimic 100.00
21-27, 29, 30: 27-Spider Man cameo 75.00
28-1st app. The Banshee 125.00
31-34, 36, 37: 34-Adkins-c/a 55.00
35-Spider-Man app. (8/67) 70.00
38-Origins of the X-Men' fecture in #38 57 ..... 75.00
39, 40: 39-New costumes 55.00
41-49, 44-1st app. E.A. Xemm in S.A. 49-Shenanka-c, 1st Polaris 50.00
50, 51-Shenanka-c/a 55.00
52 ..... 35.00
53-Barry Smith-c/a; 1st comic book work 55.00
54, 55 Smith cover. 54. 1st Alex Summers who later becomes Havok 54.00
56, 57, 59-65, 65-Adams-c 48.00
58-1st app. Havok (in costume) 50.00
66-1st Sunfire 35.00
68-Lead new story with Angel-c/a; Neal Adams-c/a (7/70) X Men battle Hulk 45.00
67-70, 72: 69, 70-Neal Adams-c 30.00
71-1st S.A. app. Sunfire 22.00
72-1st app. Sauron 22.00
73-New X-Men begin (8/75); see Giant-Size X-Men for 1st app. 375.00
74-Warlock w/Mark Jewelers pull-out 375.00
75-Death of Thunderbird 75.00
76-99, 234 & 304 versions exist 55.00
100-Old X-Men vs. New X-Men 58.00
101-Phoenix origin concludes 60.00
102-107: 102-Origin Storm 23.00
108-Byrne-c begins as X-Men, see Marvel Team Up #53 for 1st Byrne X-Men 45.00
109-1st Vindicator 36.00
110, 111 ..... 22.00
112-119 ..... 20.00
120-1st app. Alpha Flight (cameo) 60.00
121-Alpha Flight (1st full story) 45.00
122-128: 123-Spider-Man x-over 18.00
129-1st app. Kitty Pryde, Longin Dark Phoenix saga 27.00
130-1st app. Dazzler (by Byrne (12/80) 20.00
131 135 ..... 16.00
136, 138 ..... 14.00
137-Phoenix dies, dossier size 18.00
139-Wolverine's new costume 30.00
140-Alpha Flight app. (also in #139) 28.00
141-Into Future X-Men; Into Rachel (Phoenix II) 30.00

X-MEN
Oct, 1991-Present (1 00/1.25, color) Marvel Comics Group
1-(1.50, 52 pgs.)-Four-B'fanet covers (a-d) by Lee, Nare team & Lowe/a begins, ends #11 ..... 3.00
1-(3.95)-Prestige ed. (cover of; double gatefold-c; coated stock 5.00
2-7: X-Wolverine back to old costume (1/92, same date as Wolverine #50), 6-Sabretooth-c/a; "Pulse(r) I-II-91 ..... 4.00
8-10: B-Gambit-w, Bishop-c/story. 9-Wolverine vs. Ghost Rider 10-return of

X-Man #6

Jaguar 3.00
11-13: 11-Last Lee-c/a 12, 13-Fleisch-c/a 4.00
1-Silver ish 2nd print; came w/Silver bound game 20.00
1-b (4.95 c) Polybagged w/mail-away card 3.00
2-17-24, 26-29, 31, 28, 29-Onslaught x-over 2.00
25-(3.50, 52 pgs.) Gambit hologram-c/s, 30th ann. cover 7.00
25-30th ann. issue, B&W w/Magneto in color & Magneto Hologram, no price on cover 25.00
25-Gold 30.00
30-(1.95) Wedding issue; bound-in trading card sheet 5.00
32-33: 32-Begin 1.50-c; bound-in card sheet. 33-Gambit & Sabretooth-c/fully 2.50
36, 37-(2.95)-X-Directors ed/story 5.00
38-44, 46-49, 51-53, 55-59 ..... 1.50
47,63 Smith-a. 46, 49-Onslaught
53-Onslaught. 55, 56-Avengers, FF, Sentinels app., "Onslaught". 56-Dr. Doom app. 57-Xavier listens into custody
59-Hercules-c/app. 2.00
45-(3.95) anni. issue, gatefold-c 5.00

X-MEN ADVENTURES (TV)
Nov 1992-1996 (1.25, color)
Marvel Comics
1-Based on the TV cartoon series 5.00
2-3: 3-Magneto-c/ story 3.00
6-10: 6-Sabretooth-c/story
7-Cable-c/story
10-Archangel guest star 2.00
11-14: 11-Cable/story 1.75
15-(1.75, 52 pgs.) 1.75
...VOLUME II
1-8: 4-Bone-c and sheet 1.25
9-13: 9-Begin 1.50-c 1.50
...VOLUME III
1-13: 1-(2.95) 3.00

X-MEN 2099
Oct, 1993-No. 35, Aug, 1996
(1.25/1.50, color)
Marvel Comics
1-(1.75) Holo-c, Ron Lim/Adam Kubert-c/a 2.00
1-2nd printing (1.75) 1.75
1-Gold Edition (15,000 made), sold thru Diamond for $19.40 ..... 20.00
2-7: Lim-c/ish1 begin. 2-Death of Isaac 1.25
8-19: 8-Begin 1.50-c; bound-in

trading card sheet 1.50
20-24, 26-35, 32-Romita-c 2.00
25-(2.50) Double sized 2.50
Special 1 (2.95) 4.00
...Omni (5.95, one-shot) Hildebrandt Bros.-c/a 6.00

X-MEN (Marvel Comics)
...ALPHA
1994 (3.95, color)
1a-Wraparound chromium cover 7.00
1b-(2.95) Gold logo 50.00
.../ALPHA FLIGHT
Dec. 1985-No. 2, Dec, 1985 (Mini-series)
1, 2-Paul Smith-c/a 4.00
.../AND THE MICRONAUTS, THE
Jan, 1986-No. 4, Apr, 1986 (Mini-series)
1-4: Golden-c/a(p) in all 1.50
.../ARCHIVES
Dec, 1995-Feb. 4, Apr, 1995
(2.25, color, limited series)
1, 4: 1-3-Featuring Trigon; Claremont-s/ Sienkiewicz-a. 4-featuring Magneto 2.25
.../ARCHIVES FEATURING CAPTAIN BRITAIN
July, 1995-No. 3, May, 1996
(2.95, color, limited series)
1-3'-r/ stellar Captain Britain stories. 3.00
.../BOOKS OF ASKANI
1995 (12.95, color, one-shot)
1-painted pin-ups; w/sac. 3.00
.../VS. THE BROOD
Sept, 1996-No. 2, Oct, 1996 (2.95, color, limited series)
1, 2-wrap-around-c; Chiarello/Vitello-a(p) 3.00
.../CHRONICLES
Nov, 1995 (2.95, color)
-Wraparound-c; Age Of Apocalypse. 7.00
2-Age of Apocalypse 5.00
.../CLANDESTINE
Oct, 1996-Nov, 1996
(2.95, color, limited series)
1, 2-wrap-around-c; Alan Davis-c/s/a 3.00
.../CLASSIC (formerly Classic X-Men)
No. 46, Apr, 1989-#71 (2.25/1.50)
46-69: 47, 71, 78, 80-89: 51-56, 95, 99 ... 1.25
70, 79, 90, 97 (1.75, 52 pgs.): 90-w/1966-1975 ..... 1.75
100-(1.95, 100 Pages) 1.50-c. 104-c/ X-Men #200 ..... 1.50
.../CLASSICS
Dec, 1983-No. 3, Feb, 1984 (2.00, Baxter paper)
1-3: 2-Marvel-by N. Adams. 3.00
.../EARTHFALL
Sept, 1996 (2.95, color, one-shot)
1-Uncanny X-Men 222-224,

TRIVIA
Where is the X-Men's head quarters located?

wraparound-c 3.00
...JESUS
Feb, 1996 (4.95, color)
1-r/Avengers Ann. #10, Unc. X-Men #266, Unc. X-Men #221, Inc. Hulk #181 ...5.00
...OMEGA
June, 1995 (3.95, color, one-shot)
ea-Gail of Age of Apocalypse 5.00
nn-(49.95)-Gold ed. 50.00
...PRIME
July, 1995 (4.95, color, 56 pgs.)
nn-X-Men Beasty Returns 6.00
...RAMPAGE
1995 (5.95, color, one-shot)
nn-reprints 6.00
...ROAD TO ONSLAUGHT
Oct. 1996 (2.50, color, one-shot)
nn-r/x-Men 2.50
...SPOTLIGHT ON... STARJAMMERS (see X-Men 104)
1995 (No. 1, 2, 1996 (4.50, 52 pgs.)
1,2-Starjammers 4.50
...SURVIVAL GUIDE TO THE MANSION
Aug, 1993 (6.95, color)
1-Spiral-bound 10.00
...THE EARLY YEARS
May, 1994-No. 17, Sep, 1995 (1.50, color)
1-16-r/X-Men #1-16 w/ cvrs 1.50
17-2.50-r/X-Men #17-18 ..... 2.50
...THE ULTRA COLLECTION
Dec, 1994-No. 5, Apr, 1995
(2.95, color, limited edition)
1-5-All pin-ups, no story; 3-Bretonian gatefold; c-all X-Fans. 5-wraparound gatefold; c-full-length poster 3.00
...THE WEDDING ALBUM
1994 (2.95, color, magazine size)
1-Wedding of Scott Summers & Jean Grey 3.00
...ULTRA, THE PREVIEW
1995 (2.95, color)
nn-Kubert(c)-r 3.00
...UNLIMITED
1993-Present (3.95, color, 68 pgs.)
1 ..... 7.00
2, 4-9-origin of Magneto 5.00
11, 12-11-Magneto & Rogue, 12-"Onslaught". Juggernaut/cap 4.00
3-Sabretooth c/Story 7.50
10-Dark Beast explains Beast 6.50
...VISIONARIES
1995 (8.95, color, TPB)
nn-r/Adam & Amy Kubert-r 9.00
...VS. DRACULA
Dec., 1993 (1.75, color, 52 pgs.)
1-r/1-Alien Annual #6, Avalon-(c) 1.75
...VS. THE AVENGERS, THE
Apr, 1987-No. 4, July, 1987 (1.50, color, mini-series)
1 ..... 3.50
2-4 ..... 2.50

X-NATION 2099
May 1996-Present (1.95, color)
Marvel Comics
1-(2.95) wrap-around, foil-c, flame-alp) 4.00
2-6: 2,3-Romance. 4-Exodus-c/app. 5-Exodus app. (cameo). 6-Reed Richards app. 2.00

X-O MANOWAR
Feb, 1992-No. 68, Sept, 1996
(1.95/2.25/2.50, color)
Valiant/Acclaim Comics
1-Patriot origin. Barry Smith-c(p) 15.00
2-Barry Smith-c(p) 9.00
3-Layton-c(i) 7.00
4 1st app. Shadowman (cameo) 9.00
5-8: 5-8 Smith-c & Dikto(p) / 7-8 Unity x-over 7-Miller-c 4.00
9-13: 12-1st app. Bloody Soldier 3.00
14, 15-Tenth c/stories 3.00
15-Variant mail Pack logo, available in Ultra Pro Rigid Comic Sleeves box, no price 4.00
16-24, 26-42: 20-Secret Wars II variant. 27-29-Turok app. 28-w/Russ Heath
30-Solar app., 1st app new armor
33-Chaos Effect. 36-w/Shaman vs "Sinese Peak" card. 42-w/20 pg Bethpaula prequel, Seanw-a 2.25
25-(2.50) Contains brand-n Armorines #0 ..... 3.50
64-68 (2.50): 50-X. 50-D. 51, 52, 63-Sears's-c. 67-Golden(p) 2.50
0-(9/93, 2.50) Wrap-around embossed foil cvr. Brandon Peterson-c/a. Solar app. 3.50
0-Gold 20.00
Retribution (1993, 9.95, TPB)-Foil-bagged w/copy of X-O Database #1 ..... 10.00
Yearbook 1 (6/93, 2.95) 3.00

...IRON MAN: IN HEAVY METAL
Sept, 1996 (2.50, color, limited series)
1-Nicieza-s/Andy Smith-a 2.50

X-PATROL
Apr, 1996 (1.95, color)
Marvel Comics
1-"Amalgam Comics", Cret-a(p) 2.00

XSE (see X-MEN)
Nov, 1996-Present
(1.95, color, limited series)
Marvel Comics
1-Bishop & Shi'ard app. 2.00
1-variant-c 3.00

X-TERMINATORS
Jan, 1988-No. 4, Jan, 1989
(1.00, color, mini-series)
Marvel Comics
1 ..... 3.00
2 ..... 2.25
3, 4 ..... 1.25

X-UNIVERSE
May, 1995-No. 2, June, 1995
(2.95, color, limited series)
Marvel Comics
1-Age in "Age of Apocalypse" 5.00

YAKKY DOODLE & CHOPPER (TV)
Dec, 1962-Thimm Barbera/
Gold Key
1 ..... 50.00

YELLOW CLAW
(See Giant-Size Man-Thing 1, 4)
Oct, 1956-No. 4, Apr, 1957 (All 10¢ issues)
Atlas Comics (Manvel)
1-Origin by Maneely 550.00
2-Maneely 300.00
3, 4-Kelley-a. 4-Kelley/Severin-c 425.00

YELLOW SUBMARINE
Feb, 1969 (Giant size 68 pgs.)
Gold Key (Beatles movie tie-in)
35000-902. With pull-out poster 200.00
Without poster 55.00

YOUNGBLOOD (Image Comics/Extreme Studios)
(See Brigade #4 & Megaton Explosion)
Apr, 1992-No. 6, Feb, 1993
(1.95/2.50, color)
1-Liefeld-c/a(p), two covers 5.00
YOUNGBLOOD: STRIKEFILE

No. 6, June, 1994 (No #5)-Present (2.50, color, ongoing series)
0-(7/92, 1.95)-Cummins-2 cards; 2 cover-v/green or beige logo; w/Image #0 coupon 2.00
1-Cummins-2 cards; Liefeld-c/a in all (1st issue); Rip-Hook 8.00
1-2nd printing 3.00
1-Deluxe, 7,777 sealed w/2 cards; flip-book; 1st app. Shadowhawk, Prophet, Berserkers, Kirby & Dutchboys 5.00
2-2nd printing (1.95) 2.00
3-5, 7-10: 3-Dirk-c, 8/92 inside w/2 cards; flip-book, 1st app
Supreme in back-up. 4-(1/93) 2nd app. Keown's The Pitt, Bloodstrike app. 7,8-Liefeld-c(p)/c(p)/a(p, 8,9/19/94) 9-Wieringo-c(p)/a(p) 2.50
6-(3.50, 52pgs)-Wraparound-c 3.50
Battlezone 1 (Mar/-c, 4/93 inside, 1.95) Arsenal book, Liefeld-c(p) 2.00
Battlezone 2 (7/94 2.95)
Wraparound-c 3.00
...Yearbook 1 (7/93, 2.50)-Fold-out panel. 1st app. Terra-X, Kamm 2.50
...VOLUME II 2.50
Sept, 1995-Present (2.50, color)
1-10: 1,9-Cruz(p). 3-variant-c(3), "Behemoth, 6-"Extreme Destroyer" pt. 4); polybagged w/gaming card. 5-monar-c. 6-Angela & Glory app.
7-Shadowhawk-c/app. 10-Liefeld-c 2.50
TPB-(96, 19.95)-r/ 17.00
.../X-FORCE (w/Marvel Comics) (see X-FORCE/YOUNG BLOOD
July, 1996 (4.95, color, one-shot)

Apr, 1993-No. 11, Feb, 1995
(1.95/2.50/2.95, color, began as mini-series)
Image Comics/Extreme Studios
1-Flip book w/Joe Lee-p/a & Liefeld-c/a in all; 1st app. The Allies, Gregor, & Grey (note: #1 Gold ed.) 2.00
2-4, 11-(2.50), 11-Polybagged w/trading card 2.50
5-10-(2.95), 5-Liefeld-c(p), 8,9-(1/94) B S Pfeifer-c 3.00

YOUNG MEN
No. 24, Dec, 1953-No. 28, June, 1954
Atlas Comics
24-Origin Captain America, Human Torch, & Sub-Mariner which are revised, Red Skull app. 850.00
25-28: 25-Kamen-c/a 600.00

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST
Dec, 1995-No. 8, July, 1996
(2.95, B&W, limited series)
Dark Horse Comics
1-8-manga 3.00

ZEALOT
Aug, 1995-No. 3, Oct,1995 (2.50, color)
Image Comics/Wildstorm Productions
1-3 ..... 2.50

ZEN INTERGALACTIC NINJA
1987 (1.75, B&W)
1,2-Copyright Sam and Cate 4.00

ZEN INTERGALACTIC NINJA: APRIL FOOL'S SPECIAL
1994 (2.50,B&W)
Parody Press
1-w/Flip story of Ren Intergalactic Chihuahua 2.50

ZEN INTERGALACTIC NINJA (Entity)
No. 0, June-July, 1993-No. 3, 1994
(2.95, B&W)
0-3: 0-Gold foil stamped-c; photos of Zen -model, 1-3-foil stamped-c 3.00
0-(1992, 3.50)...All New Color Special, chromium-cvr by Joe Lee 3.50
...COOK
1994-Present (2.25, color)
1-(3.95)-Chromium die-cut-c 4.00
1-(2.25-c) 2.25
0-(2.25)-Newsstand, Joe Lee-c/ ...All New Color Special #0 ..... 2.25
2-(2.50)-Flip-book format 2.50
2-(3.50)-Flip-book format, polybagged w/chromium trading card 3.50
3-5-(2.50) 2.50
6-7-(2.95) 3.00
...Yearbook: Hazardous Duty 1 (1/95) 3.00
...Zulutron Tour of the Universe (No poster) Flip
...MILESTONE
1994-No. 3, 1994 (2.95, color, limited series)
1-3 Gold foil logo, /Debris: the Earth 3.00
...SPRING SPECTACULAR
1994 (2.95, B&W)
1-Gold foil logo 3.00
...STARBURST
1994-Present (2.95, B&W)
1-7-Gold foil logo 3.00
...THE HUNTED
1993-No. 3, 1994 (2.95, B&W)
1 (2.95)-Newsstand edition: foil logo 3.00
1-(3.50)-Polybagged w/chromium card by Sam Kieth, foil logo 3.50
2,3-(2.95)-Foil logo 3.00

ZERO HOUR: CRISIS IN TIME
(see SHOWCASE '94 #8 10)
No. 4 (8/1), Sept., 1994-No. 0 (10/1), Oct, 1994 (1.50, color, limited series)
DC Comics
4 (#1)-0 (#5) 1.50
"Ashcan" (1994, free, B&W, 8 pgs.)-0.50

ZORRO
Jan, 1966-Mar, 1968 (All photo-c)
Gold Key
1-Toth-a 65.00
2, 4, 5, 7-9-Toth-a 38.00
3, 6-Toth-a 32.00

ZORRO
Nov, 1993-No. 11, Nov, 1994 (2.50, color)
Topps
0-(11/93, 1.00, 20 pgs.) 1.00
1, 4, 6-9, 11: 1-Wilbur. 10-Jake Bullet-c. 11-Lady Rawhide-c 2.50
2-Lady Rawhide app (not a costume) 4.00
3-1st app. Lady Rawhide 8.00
5-Lady Rawhide app 4.00
10-(2.95) Lady Rawhide-c & app 4.00

KEY = HOT | GOLD

WELCOME!

Welcome to the FAN Headquarters™ listings!
You can always be sure to find the latest issue of Overstreet's FAN at any of these fine retail stores. Listings are alphabetical by state, city, and store name.

Attention Retailers: Would you like to see your store listed here FREE every month? Would you like to be eligible for free or reduced cost POP items, as well as special premiums? Just order at least 25 copies of **Overstreet's FAN** every month from your distributor, and fax us your store name, address, and phone number along with a copy of your distributor's invoice showing your order of **FAN** to (410) 560 6107. Questions? Call Administrative Assistant Karli Semenza at (410) 560-5806, ext. 249

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HOMEWOOD AL
205-870-0225

DEEP COLLECTIBLES
HUNTSVILLE AL
205-881-7327

CAPITOL CITY COMIC SHOP
MONTGOMERY AL
334-277-1246

ARKANSAS

COMIC BOOK STORE
LITTLE ROCK AR
501-227-9777

ARIZONA

ATOMIC COMICS
MESA AZ
602-649-0807

ATOMIC COMICS DIRECT
MAIL ORDER
MESA AZ
800-332-9027

ALL ABOUT BOOKS &
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PHOENIX AZ
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ATOMIC COMICS II
PHOENIX AZ
602-395-0661

HERO COMIC
PHOENIX AZ
602-843-0320

FANTASY COMICS
TUCSON AZ
520-620-1880

CALIFORNIA

COMIC HEAVEN
ALHAMBRA CA
818-289-3943

EMPIRE COMICS
BELLFLOWER CA
310-866-6420

OTHER WORLD COMICS III
BREA CA
714-257-1255

MEGA CITY COMICS
CAMARILLO CA
805-485-2737

PEE WEE COMICS
CANOGA PARK CA
818-348-2083

A & B COMIC SPECIALISTS
CARMICHAEL CA
916-973-9064

STAND UP COMICS
CERRITOS CA
310-513-2879

AMAZING AL'S COMIX &
CARDZ I
CHULA VISTA CA
619-498-0445

COMIC BOOKIE
CLAREMONT CA
909-399-0228

FLYING COLORS COMICS &
OTHER
CONCORD CA
510-825-5410

DADS COMIC SHOP
CORONA CA
909 273 0972

COSMIC COMICS/CROSS-
ROADS
COVINA CA
714 339 8886

COMICS INK
CULVER CITY CA
310-204-2240

MELVIN E NASH
CUPERTINO CA
408-253-2643

COMIC GALLERY
ESCONDIDO CA
619-745-5660

COMICS & COMIX
FAIRFIELD CA

JNJ COMICS, INC.
FOUNTAIN VALLEY CA
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CUTTING EDGE COMICS
FRESNO CA
209-298-2538

HEROES COMICS & CARDS
FRESNO CA
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IVY JOES SPORTSCARDS
FRESNO CA
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FRESNO CA
209-278-6918

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GARDEN GROVE CA
714-774-1159

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GARDENA CA
310-538-3179

KOMIC KORN
GRANADA HILLS CA
818-368-6500

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LAKEWOOD CA
310 867 7227

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LANCASTER CA
805-948-1396

AMAZING COMICS &
CARDS
LONG BEACH CA
310-493-4427

GRAPHITTI
LOS ANGELES CA
310-824-2656

GRAPHITTI RECORDS
LOS ANGELES CA
310-559-2058

CRAZY CAT COMICS
MANHATTEN BCH CA
310-372-6704

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MORENO VALLEY CA
909-924 7866

COMICS N STUFF #1
NATIONAL CITY CA
619-429-9909

BRAVE NEW WORLD
NEWHALL CA
805-259-4745

CONTINENTAL
NORTHRIDGE CA
818-368-8909

DR COMICS & MR GAMES
OAKLAND CA
510-836-1000

21ST CENTURY COMICS &
TOYS
ORANGE CA
714-633 3440

COMICS FACTORY
PASADENA CA
818 585 06 8

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LECTIBLES
PLEASANTON CA
510-734-9298

DARK ANGEL COMICS
POMONA CA
909-629-7130

COMIC BIZARRE
RANCHO CORDOVA CA
916-638-4973

COMICS N MORE
RESEDA CA
818-341 9630

CLASSIC COMICS & CARDS
ROSEVILLE CA
916-781-7764

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SACRAMENTO CA
916-331-9203

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SACRAMENTO CA
916-392-2467

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SACRAMENTO CA
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SAN BERNADINO CA
909-798-4300

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SAN DIEGO CA
619-578-9444

COMIC GALLERY
SAN DIEGO CA
619-483-6853

COMIC KAZE
SAN DIEGO CA
619-278-0371

COMICS N STUFF
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619 222 8958

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SAN DIEGO CA
619-698-1177

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SAN FRANCISCO CA
415-861-1220

CARDS & COMICS CENTRAL
SAN FRANCISCO CA
415-668 3544

COMICS & COMIX
SAN FRANCISCO CA
415-982-3311

JEFFREY'S TOYS
SAN FRANCISCO CA
415-346-6551

COMICS AND DA KIND
SAN FRANCISCO CA
415 753-3037

FUN STUFF COMICS &
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SAN LUIS OBISPO CA
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SKY HIGH COMICS
SAN MARCOS CA
619 471-0448

LEE'S COMICS #1
SAN MATEO CA
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SANTA CLARA CA
408 985 7481

CLUB HOUSE
SANTA CRUZ CA
408 423 9768

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HI DE HO #1
SANTA MONICA CA
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SANTA ROSA CA
707-576-7754

PLANET X COMICS
STANTON CA
714 893 1004

PLANET X COMICS
STANTON CA
714 8574 6115

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STUDIO CITY CA
818 761-3763

COMICS & COMIX
SUISUN CITY CA
510-845 4091

COMIC CLUB 1
TORRANCE CA
310 328-2859

SPORTSCARD HEAVEN
TULARE CA
209-685-1132

COMIC CENTRAL
TURLOCK CA
209-668-3339

COMICS TOONS 'N' TOYS
TUSTIN CA
714-730-2117

KOMIC KID
VAN NUYS CA
818-881 4766

DREAM WORLD
VENTURA CA
805 650 3349

RALPH'S COMIC CORNER
VENTURA CA
805 653 2732

CAPTAIN NEMO COMICS
SAN LUIS OBISPO CA
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COMICS +
VICTORVILLE CA
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COLEY'S CARDS & COMICS
COLORADO SPRINGS CO
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ORANGE CT
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SHELTON CT
203 922 1621

BARRON'S COMICS &
CARDS
TRUMBULL CT
203 783 1620

OFF THE WALL COMICS &
CARDS
W HARTFORD CT
860 233 8714

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FIRST STATE COMICS
REAR DE
302 836 8806

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MONSTER WATER & SPORTS
COLLECT
CLEARWATER FL
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ELWATSON BCH FL
904 241 7307

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JACKSONVILLE FL
904 721 4658

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JACKSONVILLE FL
904 721 2776

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ALTERNATE DIMENSIONS, INC.
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305 663-4730

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NAPLES FL
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NICEVILLE FL
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COSMIC CONNECTION
OCALA FL
904 867 4983

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ORLANDO FL
407 477 9767

THE COMIC DEALER
ORLANDO FL
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PANAMA CITY FL
904 763 9726

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954 783 2018

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TAMPA FL
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COLLEGE PARK GA
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DECATUR GA
404 248 9846

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DULUTH GA
770 623 3675

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770-973 2253

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SAVANNAH GA
912-355 3849

BOOK END
STOCKBRIDGE GA
770 474 1032

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808 735 7676

TONY'S CAFE
HON HI
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HONOLULU HI
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HONOLULU HI
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BELVIDERE IL
618 233-6864

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BOLINGBROOK IL
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CARDS
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THE LOWER DECK
CHICAGO IL
312 397 3285

WINDY CITY COMICS
CHICAGO IL
312 935 3244

WINDY CITY COMICS
CHICAGO IL
312 866 0900

GRAHAM CRACKERS
DARIEN IL
708 910 3059

COMIC QUEST
DUNDEE IL
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GRAHAM CRACKERS
GLENELLYN IL
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MCHENRY IL
815 344 9696

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MT PROSPECT IL
847-398 6060

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NAPERVILLE IL
708 355 4310

ACME BOOKS
NORMAL IL
309 452 1332

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ORLAND PARK IL
708-349 2486

ACME BOOKS
PEORIA IL
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TIM'S CORNER
ROCK ISLAND IL
309 794 0333

TOMORROW IS YESTERDAY
ROCKFORD IL
815-633-0330

COMICS AND BEYOND
SCHAMBURG IL
847 539-9808

KEITH'S BOOKS
SCHAUMBURG IL
847 534 9436

COMIC SERVICE
SPRINGFIELD IL
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GRAHAM CRACKERS
WHEATON IL
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EVANSVILLE IN
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DOWNTOWN COMICS, INC.
INDIANAPOLIS IN
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DOWNTOWN COMICS INC
INDIANAPOLIS IN
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COMIC CARNIVAL
INDIANPOLIS IN
317 253 8882

LAFAYETTE BLUE MOON
LAFAYETTE IN
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LAPORTE IN
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MISHAWAKA IN
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RICHMOND IN
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SOUTH BEND IN
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TERRE HAUTE IN
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THE CORNER SHOP
SALINA KS
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PRAIRIE DOG COMICS
WICHITA KS
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BOWLING GREEN KY
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FLORENCE KY
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COMIC BOOK WORLD, INC
LOUISVILLE KY
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LOUISVILLE KY
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COMIC VAULT
RADCLIFF KY
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LOUISIANA

LOUISIANA DOUBLE PLAY
BATON ROUGE LA
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MASSACHUSETTS

NEWBURY COMICS, INC.
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BROCKTON MA
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CAMBRIDGE MA
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EVERETT MA
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LARRY'S COMICS
LOWELL MA
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NEW ENGLAND COMICS
MALDEN MA
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VIDEO CONNECTION
NATICK MA
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QUINCY MA
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READING MA
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WESTLAND ENTERPRISES
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BALTIMORE MD
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GERRY S COMIC WORLD - SECURITY MALL
BALTIMORE MD
410 298 1738

ALTERNATE WORLDS
COCKEYSVILLE MD
410 666 3290

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COLLEGE PARK MD
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GLEN BURNIE MD
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410-437-5542

GIBFARETTO
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301 251 2888

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WALDORF MD
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BANGOR ME
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MOONSHADOW COMICS
S PORTLAND ME
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ANN ARBOR MI
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616 349 8866

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LIVONIA MI
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ROCK & COMICS
MADISON HTS MI
810 545 2232

LANGE'S CARDS & COMICS I-10
MUSKEGON MI
616 847 0047

BOB'S COMICS
NEW BALTIMORE MI
810 716-9511

HEROES BY THE HARBOR
NILES MI
616 469 7750

COMICS ARCHIVES, INC
REDFORD MI
313 937 8860

GALAXY COMICS
SAGINAW MI
517 799 6334

GOLDMINE COMICS & CARDS
WYOMING MI
616 361 2352

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COMIC ARCHIVES
APPLE VALLEY MN
612 891 6450

COLLECTORS CONNECTION
DULUTH MN
218 722 9551

SHINDER'S READ MORE
MINNEAPOLIS MN
612-333-3628

MINNESOTA COMIC ZONE
RICHFIELD MN
612 869-2766

HOT COMICS & COL LECTIBLES
ST PAUL MN
612-776-7024

MISSOURI

BUG'S COMICS & GAMES
FLORISSANT MO
314-839-5131

CLINT'S BOOKS COMICS & GAMES
KANSAS CITY MO
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SPRINGFIELD MO
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RED HOT COMICS
ST CHARLES MO
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DARK TOWER BOOKS & COMICS
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314 279 7968

MONTANA

BUMPIN LOUEY'S COMICS & COLLECTIBLES
GREAT FALLS MT
406 453 0998

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ASHEVILLE NC
704 252 6474

HEROES AREN'T HARD TO FIND, INC
CHARLOTTE NC
704-375-7467

REBEL BASE COMICS & TOYS
CHARLOTTE NC
704 535 0309

BALLISTIC COMICS
CONCORD NC
704-782 5309

HEROES ARE HERE
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919-731-3131

ACME COMICS #1
GREENSBORO NC
910-855-0217

COLLECTION CONNECTION
GREENSBORO NC
910-274-2273

BLUE RIDGE COMICS
HENDERSONVILLE NC
704-687-2743

DADDY JIM'S
HIGH POINT NC
910-889-9900

CAPITAL COMICS OF
RALEIGH
RALEIGH NC
919-832-4600

HEROES AREN'T HARD TO
FIND INC
WINSTON SALEM NC
919 765 4370

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COSMIC COMICS INC
LINCOLN NE
402 467 2727

GROUND ZERO HOBBY INC
OF NE
OMAHA NE
402 733 7212

JAT COMICS, INC.
OMAHA NE
402 292 2337

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AZAR COMICS
AYRHM NH
603 588 3726

STORYTELLER'S COMICS
GOFFSTOWN NH
603 644 1230

THE COMIC STORE
MANCHESTER NH
603-666-6705

THE COMIC STORE
MASHUA NH
603 881 4855

CHRIS' COMIC & CARDS
SALEM NH
603-898-4151

CHRIS' COMIC & CARDS
SEABROOK NH
603 474 3283

NEW JERSEY

HOBBY SHOP
ABERDEEN NJ
908 583-0505

MEHTIBAT COMICS
CLIFTON NJ
201-365-1488

COMIC ATTITUDES
EDISON NJ
908 549 9100

JOKER'S CHILD
FAIRLAWN NJ
201-796-6830

HEIGHTS CARDS & COMICS
MARLBROUCK HTS NJ
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STEVE'S COMIC RELIEF, INC
LAWRENCEVILLE NJ
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MOUNT HOLLY NJ
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PARADOX COMICS
N ARLINGTON NJ
201-998-1212

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N PLAINFIELD NJ
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COMIC ATTITUDES
NEW BRUNSWICK NJ
908-249-5558

MC COMICS
OLD BRIDGE NJ
908-238-5969

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COMIC SHOP
PARAMUS NJ
201 843 4353

LITTLE SHOP OF COMICS &
CARDS
SCOTCH PLAINS NJ
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BROOKLYN NY
2 2 353 3300

BUFFALO 5 BEST COMICS
CHEKTOWAGA NY
716-565-9119

CHAMELEON COMICS &
CARDS
FLUSHING NY
718-461-6675

RICK'S COMIC CAVE
FORST HILLS NY
718 575 88 5

COLLECTOR'S KINGDOM
HUNTINGTON STAT NY
516-549-4326

COMIC DENL INC
KEW GARDENS NY
718 805 3789

PLANET COMICS
LAKE GROVE NY
516 724 4096

MANUEY VIDEO
MANUET NY
914 623-6600

CAPTAIN COMICS
NEW HYDE PARK NY
516 739 1766

ACTION COMICS
NEW YORK NY
212 639-1976

ALEX'S IMP
NEW YORK NY
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BUS TERM NAL BOOK & PER
ODICAL
NEW YORK NY
212-736 4380

CHAMELEON COMICS &
CARDS
NEW YORK NY
212-587-3411

COLLECTOR'S CACHE
NEW YORK NY
212-374-1240

COLLECTOR'S UNIVERSE 2
NEW YORK NY
212-922-1128

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NEW YORK NY
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COSMIC COMICS
NEW YORK NY
212 460 5522

COLLECTOR'S CHOICE
BROOKPORT NY
716-637-8556

POWER COMICS & BASE
BALL CARDS
BRONX NY
718-653-5674

WOW COMICS
BRONX NY
718-829-0461

COLLECTORS FANTASY
BROOKLYN NY
718 746 1673

HEROES HIDEOUT
FAR ROCKAWAY NY
[illegible]

MUTANT MANIA
BROOKLYN NY
718 236-1270

ST MARK'S COMICS
BROOKLYN NY
2 2 353 3300

BUFFALO 5 BEST COMICS
CHEKTOWAGA NY
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CHAMELEON COMICS &
CARDS
FLUSHING NY
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FORST HILLS NY
718 575 88 5

COLLECTOR'S KINGDOM
HUNTINGTON STAT NY
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FRANK MILLER

YAWN

Politics and comic books. They've got more in common with each other than you might think.

Now, news junkies like me might puff out our chests and brag about how wonderfully responsible we are, reading our newspapers and tuning in to National Public radio and all that, but don't be fooled. A big piece of the appeal of politics is its entertainment value. And there's nothing like a presidential election. That's the NBA playoffs, the Final Four. It's Holyfield Versus Tyson. When it's a real fever-pitch, knock-down-drag-out, Lord-only-knows-who's-gonna-win election, it's the Galactus Trilogy.

But this last one...

Yawn.

Us news junkies felt like we were stuck watching one of those by-the numbers cop movies. You know the kind. You can set your watch by the "plot twists". You sit there and pray for a surprise, but you're only fooling yourself. There's never a flicker of a doubt in your mind that the bad guy's gonna open the show by showing you he's a bad guy and sadistically killing somebody, or maybe a few hundred somebodies. Maybe you go for popcorn while the hero has a tense conversation with his ex-wife as his adorable kid acts dejected. Maybe you come back and keep watching, but you're already resigned. You can bet the rent that the hero's partner will be gunned down a half hour before the thing stumbles to its bloody finale. Maybe you'll even stick around for the tears and hugging as the ex-wife and kid are saved and the hero's family is reunited.

That's how much fun the election was to watch.

And those poor pundits. They must've had their hands full—or rather, they must've had their hands *empty*, which is worse. They had to make it sound interesting. Even exciting. Even after the last votes were cast, they had to keep going, pondering the voters' "mandate," filling yard upon yard of column space with analyses of what "message" was being "sent" by "angry white men" and "soccer moms."

These pundits are smart people with inside information, experts at what is, for the news junkie, a spectator sport. There's no reason to think they didn't accurately divine some meaning from the exit polls. But I've got to imagine that at least once or twice Meg Greenfield or Robert Novak stared at a deadline and a glowing blank computer screen and was sorely tempted to sum up the whole shebang with a single syllable:

Yawn.

But why was the election such a bore? Was it only that President Clinton was way ahead in the polls for such a long time? Or was it the nature of the year-long "debate" we witnessed, as the campaigns unfolded? It all tasted a little bit like food somebody'd already chewed, didn't it?

It did to this news junkie, and, I suspect, to many others. Which was frustrating because both major-party candidates were darned impressive men. Both had overcome tremendous personal obstacles to make their mark on history. Both had spent decades immersed in public affairs. As experts, both certainly had more than our own, often ill-considered, ephemeral, emotional opinions to offer. They could've done more than read back to us what their opinion polls told them we were saying to *them*.

Sure. For a while, it's pleasant enough to get pandered to. But it sure as heck doesn't get your blood pumping. And before long, it's hard to stifle that yawn.

Since our nation needs a government, we'll still have a president, but if a president were, say, an entertainment product that we could all live without? If votes were sales...

In our little world of comic books, there's much scratching of the head and gnashing of the teeth and much discussion of our current "down market," as if it were bad weather that just wouldn't let up, an uncontrollable act of God. But look at what we're *doing*. Were we to consciously set out to drive our audience away, how better than to keep trying tricks that don't work anymore?

A whole lot of our retailers check "hot lists" to find the next sure-fire "hot comic" and try to convince their clientele that these "hot comics" are a worthy investment. But (it apparently can't be said too often) *collectibles* only appreciate in price if they are *rare*, and *huge print runs don't make for scarcity*. It's not a big leap in logic to point out, and I'm hardly the first to do so, that *a pre- ordained "hot comic" that's ordered on the hundreds of thousands is a fool's investment*. Once a fan's been burned by that particular three-card monty scam, how likely is he or she to come back? The past few years should be proof enough that our industry can't flourish as a low-rent Franklin Mint.

We gotta get the *readers* back. And our first order of business is to serve up comics that are fresh and new. This "down market" of ours will only continue to sink if publishers and cartoonists keep hauling out that same, dusty old bag of worn-out broken toys and keep hammering out yet more contrived crossovers, yet more flashy defribrillations of characters created before most of us were born, and if the industry, from promotion to distribution to retail, keeps pinning its hopes on prechewed food.

Just take a look at the deserted, picked-clean old trailer park that Stan Lee once rightly called the House of Ideas. Where is the genuine *electricity* of the Marvel Ages? (Never mind the drug-rush euphoria of the false boom of a few years back. That's gone, and it was poisonous anyway.) Where, anywhere, is the imagination, the enthusiasm, the sheer *verve*, the kind that Stan showed, not just co-creating a vibrant new mythology, but also enticing a new generation to fall in love with it?

There's more and better talent in our field right now than there ever has been . Surely we can we've got what it takes to turn that yawn out there into a startled gasp—and then, a cheer, loud and long, as a new age of comics begins.

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